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ALCHEMY AND THE ALCHEMISTS

AMS PRESS
NEW YORK

ALCHEMY AND THE ALCHEMISTS

Giving the Secret of the Philosopher's Stone, the Elixir of Youth, and
the Universal Solvent. Also showing that the TRUE Alchem-
ists did not seek to Transmute base metals into gold,
but sought the Highest Initiation or the Devel-
opment of the Spiritual Nature in Man

"Know Thyself"



Vol. 3

BY

DR. R. SWINBURNE CLYMER,

Author of "The Rosicrucians; their Teachings," "Divine Alchemy,"
"Philosophy of Fire," "Ancient Mystic Oriental
Masonry," etc,

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IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

DEDICATION

To all those who are truly interested in the Higher Science and the Search for the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life; to those who have helped me form a Complete Philosophy and especially to one without whose help these Works would not be possible.

PREFACE

In presenting volume three of the series entitled "Alchemy and the Alchemists," the editor has no excuse to make. It was *necessary* to complete the work. Another volume will follow the present one, but that will be devoted almost exclusively to the "Elixir" and the "Stone," in their relation to the cure of disease and the prolongation of life, and while I know that many will laugh at the idea, it does not concern me in the least. I know that the masses have laughed at every new discovery ever made—that is, when they did not persecute or execute the discoverer, and I suppose they will ever continue to do so.

Every true Philosopher that the world has ever known has recognized the fact that there *is* such a thing as the "Elixir." Mind, I do not say that this is a material remedy, for it is *not*. But there *is* an *elixir* whereby disease can be cured as if by Magic, and there

is a stone whereby life may be prolonged many, very many years.

Concerning the present work there is nothing to explain, for the seeker after Truth will find full explanations throughout the book. It is not claimed that everything is made clear, but for those that will see, the mystery is cleared away as regards to the *subject*. And what is more, it is shown that, while the Alchemists each had a different name for the *material* and the *subject*, it was *ever the same*.

I wish to call attention to a few forces in Nature, and more especially *in man*, which it will pay the reader to bear in mind. The subject of Alchemy is completely treated throughout this work, but I wish all to understand that it is *not* claimed that the *method* is given, for it is not. The method is only taught by the Secret School, and but *one* Fraternity in America. Many of the preliminary instructions *are* given, such as pertain to the diet, thoughts, the life to be led, etc., but the Key to the Development is not given and *cannot* be given in neither books nor any so-called courses, for each individual Neophyte must be instructed individually. A course and book may do a great deal to

open the way and the mind for this Development, but it can never give the necessary instructions for this training or Initiation, and I venture to say that many of these so-called courses have done more to fill the mad houses with Insane, and have brought more ill feeling against both Occultism and Mysticism than all else combined.

In "Euphrates," by Eugenius Philalethes, we find the following instructions concerning the Art: "It is the advice of the Brothers of the R. C. that those who would be proficient in this art should study the elements and their operations *before* they seek after the tinctures of metals. It is to be wished indeed that men would do so, for then we should not have so many broilers, and so few philosophers. But here it may be questioned, who is he that studies the elements for any such end as to observe and imitate their operations? For in the Universities we study them only to attain to a false book theory, whereof no use can be made but quacking, disputing, and making a noise. Verily the doctrine of the Schoolmen hath allayed and perverted even that desire of knowledge which God planted in man. For the traditions we receive there, coming from

our superiors, carry with them the awe of the tutor, and this breeds in us an opinion of their certainty; so that a University man cannot in all his lifetime, attain to so much reason and confidence as to look beyond his lesson. I have often wondered that any sober spirits can think Aristotle's philosophy perfect, when it consists in mere words without any further effects; for of a truth the falsity and insufficiency of a mere notional knowledge is so apparent that no wise man will assert it. This is best known to the physicians, who, when they have been initiated in this whirligig, are forced at last to leave it, and to assume new principles, if they will be such as their profession requires they should be."

In the comments on the above, we are told that: "Study, search, think, and experiment for *yourself*. So only can you find the light that will make your particular life a living reality. To accept a ready-made belief blindly is to commit mental and moral suicide. You must slay the delusions, the constrictive forces by which you find yourself surrounded when you start on your search for Light. You must fight and conquer the dragons of habit and custom which

stultify your Spiritual Consciousness; kill them and wash yourself in their blood, like the heroes of old. You must fail, and fall, and then rise again; you must strip yourself of all idolatrous shams, until you find the vivifying idea or light which shall render your life fruitful. *Each man or woman must do this for him or herself.* This is the teaching of the Brothers of the Rosy Cross, and it is the only *living* truth, for it has no finality; and the Nemesis of all reformers is finality.

“But this truth has never more than half dawned upon the world; the leader of each wave of evolution looks upon those who went before him as having erred. But the Heroic Man is always right for the time he lives in. Dante was right in the age when Catholicism was a living force; Shakespeare was right when feudalism was a living force. So Luther was right when only the husk of a religion was left, and Cromwell was in the right when the belief in the divine right of kings had died out in the race.

“When we have found the constructive faith that has the inherent force to carry us onwards, we shall be

right. But what that is, only the heart of each man can tell him.

“In the midst of the Renaissance, through the Reformation, and Civil Wars, and after the narrowing fights of the schoolmen, Bacon called on all men to weigh and consider for themselves.

“Vaughan was echoing this cry when he hurled abuse at the critic and exalted the artist and craftsman, for Aristotle must ever be the type of the former, as Plato is the type of the latter.

“But we must not forget in reading the works of Vaughan, that the dawn of experimental science had scarcely appeared when they were written. For much that is commonplace to us, would have been considered a miracle at that time; and we must appreciate the vigor of his intellect when we find him saying so much in 1655 that is still being said by those who have thought out for themselves a complete theory of life based upon a clear knowledge of its possibilities and its limitations. Not a little of Vaughan’s wisdom might be well accepted by those who study the metaphysical side of life; but who disdain to put in prac-

tice any of the theories they are so busy in promulgating.

“For, as he says, ‘without effect, Philosophy is useless and not to be numbered among our necessities.’

“One of the grandest and most sublime faculties of the human mind and Soul is the imagination and neither Mystic nor Alchemist can do anything without having this faculty well and powerfully developed. Not abnormally, but under thorough control of the Will. I will appeal to the Masters for instructions on this point.

“There is an exceedingly interesting Socratis dialogue between Thespesion, the abbot of the Gymnosophist community, and Appolonius, on the comparative merits of the Greek and Egyptian ways of representing the Gods. It runs somewhat as follows, says G. R. S. Mead.

“ ‘What! Are we to think,’ says Thespesion, ‘that the Pheidias and Praxiteles went up to heaven and took impressions of the forms of the Gods, and so make an art of them, or was it something else that set them a-modelling?’

“ ‘Yes, something else,’ said Appolonius, ‘something pregnant with wisdom.’

“ ‘What was that? Surely you cannot say it was anything else but imitation?’

“ ‘*Imagination wrought them—a workman wiser by far than imitation; for imitation only makes what he has seen, whereas imagination makes what it has never seen, conceiving it with reference to the thing it really is.*’

“ ‘*Imagination,*’ says Appolonius, ‘*is one of the most potent faculties, for it enables us to reach nearer to realities.* It is generally supposed that Greek sculpture was merely a glorification of physical beauty, in itself quite unspiritual. *It was an idealization of form and features, limbs and muscles, an empty glorification of the physical with nothing, of course, really corresponding to it in the nature of things.* But Appolonius declared it brings us nearer to the *real*, as Pythagoras and Plato declared before him, and as all the wise teach. He meant this literally, not vaguely and fantastically. He asserted that the types and ideas of things are the only realities. He meant that between the imperfection of the earth and the highest divine

type of all things, were grades of increasing perfection. He meant that *within each man* was a form of perfection, though of course not yet absolutely perfect. That the angel *in* man, his *daemon*, was of God-like beauty, the summation of all the finest features he had ever worn in his many lives on earth. The Gods, too, belonged to the world of types, of models, of perfections, the *heaven-world*. The Greek sculptors had succeeded in getting in contact with this world, and the faculty they used was imagination."

Paracelsus, the greatest of middle-age Masters taught that: "Man is a two-fold being, having a divine and an animal nature. If he feels, and thinks, and acts as divine being should act, he is a true man; if he feels and acts like an animal, he is then an animal, and the equal of those animals whose mental characteristics are manifested in him. An exalted imagination caused by a desire for the good raises him up; a low imagination caused by a desire for that which is low and vulgar drags him down and degrades him.

"The Spirit (Mind) is the Master, Imagination the tool or workman, and the body the plastic material. Imagination is the power by which the Will forms

sidereal entities out of thoughts. Imagination is not *fancy*, which latter is the corner-stone of superstition and foolishness. The imagination of man becomes pregnant through desire, and gives birth to deeds. Every one may regulate and educate his imagination so as to come thereby into contact with spirits, and *be taught by them*. Spirits desiring to act upon man act upon his imagination, and they therefore make often use of his dreams for the purpose of acting through him. During sleep the sidereal man may by the power of the imagination be sent out of the physical form, at a distance to act for some purpose. No place is too far for the imagination to go, and the imagination of one man may impress that of another, wherever it reaches.

“Imagination is the beginning of the corpus of a form, and it guides the process of its growth. The Will is a dissolving power, which enables the body to become impregnated by the “*tinctura*” of the imagination. He who wants to know how a man can unite his power of imagination with the power of the imagination of Heaven, must know by what process this may be done. A man comes into possession of Crea-

tive power by uniting his own mind with the Universal Mind, and he who succeeds in doing so, will be in possession of the highest possible wisdom; the lower realm of Nature will be subject to him, and the powers of Heaven will aid him, because Heaven is the servant of Wisdom.

“A strong faith and a powerful imagination are the two pillars supporting the door to the temple of Magic (Alchemy), and without which nothing can be accomplished. Imagination is the Creative power of man, and it may act instinctively and without any conscious effort of the will. Man has a visible and an invisible workshop; the visible one is his body, the invisible one his imagination (mind). The sun gives light, and this light is not tangible, but its heat may be felt, and if the rays are concentrated it may set a house on fire. The imagination is a sun in the Soul of man, acting in its own sphere as the sun of the Earth acts in that of the latter. Wherever the latter shines, germs planted in the soil grow and vegetation springs up, and the sun of the Soul acts in a similar manner, and calls the forms of the soul into existence. Visible and tangible forms grow into existence from invisible

elements by the power of the sunshine. Invisible vapors are attracted and collected together into visible mists by the power of the sun of the outer world, and the *inner* sun of man may work similar wonders. The great world is only a product of the imagination of the Universal Mind, and man is a little world of its own that imagines and creates by the power of imagination. If man's imagination is strong enough to penetrate into every corner of his interior world, it will be able to create things in those corners, and whatever man thinks will take form in his soul. But the imagination of nature is like a monkey aping the actions of man. That which man does is imitated by the monkey and the pictures formed in the imagination of man create corresponding images in the mirror of nature.

“Imagination is like the sun. The sun has a light which is not tangible; but which, nevertheless, may set a house on fire; but the imagination is like a sun in man acting in that place to which its light is directed.

“Man is what he thinks. If he thinks fire, he is fire; if he thinks war, then will he cause war; it all depends whether the whole of his imagination becomes

an entire sun, i. e., that he wholly imagines that which he wills.

“The sun acts upon the visible soil of the earth, and upon invisible matter in the air; imagination acts upon the invisible substances of the soul, but the visible Earth is formed from the invisible elements of the Earth, and man’s physical body is formed from his invisible soul, and the soul of man is as intimately related to the soul of the Earth as the physical body of the former is related to the physical body of the latter, and they continually act upon each other, and without the latter the former could not exist. Visible matter becomes invisible, and is acted on by the soul, and invisible matter becomes organized and is made visible again through the influence of the soul. If a pregnant woman imagines something strongly, the effects of her imagination may become manifest in the child. Imagination springs from desire, and as man may have good or evil desires, likewise he may have a good or an evil imagination. A strong desire of either kind will give rise to a strong imagination. Curses as

well as blessings will only be effective if they come from the heart." *

E. Levi, one of the greatest Mystics of the nineteenth century, tells us that: "The intelligence and Will of man are instruments of incalculable power and capacity. But intelligence and will possess as their help-mate and instrument, a faculty that is too imperfectly known, the omnipotence of which belongs exclusively to the domain of Magic. I speak of the imagination, which the Kabbalists term the *Diaphane*, or the *Translucid*. Imagination, in effect, is like the soul's eye; therein forms are outlined and preserved; thereby we behold the reflections of the invisible world; it is the glass of vision and the apparatus of magical life; by its intervention we heal diseases, modify the seasons, drive death away from the living, and raise the dead to life, because it is the imagination which exalts the will and gives it a hold upon the Universal agent. Imagination determines the shape of the child in its mother's womb, and decides the destiny of men; it lends wings to contagion, and

* Hartmann "Paracelsus."

directs the weapons of warfare. Are you exposed to battle? Believe yourself to be invulnerable, like Achilles, and you will be so, says Paracelsus. Fear attracts bullets, but they are repelled by courage. It is well known that persons with amputated limbs feel pain in the very members which they possess no longer.

“Imagination is the instrument of *the adaptation of the word*. Imagination applied to reason is genius. Reason is one, as genius is one, in the multiplicity of its works. There is one principle, there is one truth, there is one reason, there is one absolute and universal philosophy. Whatsoever is, subsists in unity considered as beginning and returns into unity considered as end. One is in one; that is to say, all is in all. Unity is the principle of numbers; it is also the principle of motion, and, *consequently of life*. The entire human body is summed up in the unity of a single organ, which is the brain. All religions are summed up in the unity of a single dogma, which is the affirmation of being and its equality with itself, which constitutes its mathematical value. There is only one dogma in Magic, and it is this:—The visible is the manifestation of the invisible, or, in other terms, the

perfect word, in things appreciable and visible, bears an exact proportion to the things which are inappreciable by our senses and unseen by our eyes. The Manus uplifts one hand towards heaven and points down the other to earth, and he says: 'Above, immensity: Below, immensity still! Immensity equals immensity.' This is true in things seen as in things unseen."

"In all parts and spheres of the life of humanity imagination is equally potent," says A. E. Waite in "Azoth." It is Religion. The deepest and primal mystery of all Vital religion is the process which we call Conversion, and that is a radical change of ideas, resulting in a new bent of mind, a fresh direction of activity, a deflection of entire life. All Theosophy, all Kabbalism, all Mysticism, (all Alchemists,) have recognized the power of imagination, of the Diaphane or Translucid. It is the Great Magic Agent of Eliphas Levi. It is the *raison d'être* of the sensuous in all hierarchic ritualism, and the development of imagination is the *true* object of Celestial Magic and Spiritual Alchemy. Imagination is to fantasy what the aureoline side of the *Magnum Opus* was to the argentine

phase. The fancy plays and pleases; the imagination commands, compels. Imagination creates, fancy combines only. We are charmed by a tale of the fairies; we are enthralled by a romance of magic. The Countess D'Aulnoy is delightful, but we are overwhelmed by Tieck. Fancy changes for a moment the withered leaf into the precious metal; imagination institutes a permanent Alchemical conversion. So also, what is fantastic in religious departures may shortly divert the soul, but it requires the deep things of consecrated imagining to accomplish a real Regeneration. Fancy changes the manner; imagination transfigures the motive. Imagination is then everything; in its own order it is Supreme. And in the recognition of this fact we find another reason for an appeal to the poets, for they are the Hierophants of Imagination. The facts, principles, and theorems of Occult or Hermetic science are barren till they are vivified by the power of intelligence. Magical acts have exoteric actuality on the historical plane, but they become factors in the Soul's progress, and are spiritually illuminating only on the purified plane of intense and supreme imagination. The true plane of Magic is

the Psychic and Translucid. What mystical science teaches is how to realize the dream. What are called the facts of magic offer in a certain sense a pabulum to aspiration, and are a plastic matter for the mind's Creative faculty to interpret and adapt as it will. Here is no question of romantic historical theories or brilliant but unreliable presentations of historical occurrences; on the plane of history these things are intolerable. It is a question of psychological interpretation, and the psychochemical Transmutation of the commonplace for the arcane ends of the Soul. It is a process which has taken place in all ages, which works at this day more powerfully than ever. It is that natural process by which the bitterness and trivialities of the past are unconsciously eliminated by the mind in retrospection, which illuminates the vistas of memory with the softened and beautifying radiance of the uncreated light. In sublimity and significance the most high-created prodigies of Magic fall short of the undefined grandeur which their first and far-away impression creates in an imagination that is at touch with the vivid and the wonderful—which impression, on a nearer acquaintance, we perceive to

“ ‘.....die away,

And fade into the light of common day.’

“This is the true secret of the vividness of fancy and the consequent proximity and realism of Fairyland, for every impressionable childhood,—the commonizing influence of close acquaintance has not had time to work. The Rosicrucian Mystery is full of grace and terror to the childhood of transcendental enquiry till the exoteric history of the Rosicrucians becomes known, when the amaranthine crown of those far-famed Teutons crumbles into ashes in the hand. At times, however, the stage of enquiry and study is followed by that of initiation, and then the Rose-Cross Mystery may assume a new aspect, with a Light towards its solution.”

What has been said, and the quotations made from some of the greatest known Masters should be enough for any student. He who cannot find the Key in these quotations will not yet be ready for the work of Initiation. His mind is not yet ready to grasp the Ideal, the beautiful in life and it will be many days ere he can enter the Inner Temple of the Initiates.

Throughout the work, much has been said concern-

ing the life and some also concerning the diet. The diet of the student or Neophyte is absolutely one of the most important of all things and unless the diet is pure the *work* cannot be pure. In closing, I turn to the "Life of Appolonius of Tyanna," by Mead, in which we find that:

"By common consent the most virtuous livers of Greece were the members of the Pythagorean schools, both men and women. After the death of their founder the Pythagoreans seem to have gradually blended with the Orphic communities, and the 'Orphic life' was the recognized term for a life of purity and self-denial. We also know that the Orphics, and therefore the Pythagoreans, were actively engaged in the reformation, or even in the entire reforming, of the Baccho-Eleusinian rites; they seem to have brought back the pure side of the Bacchic cult with their reinstitution or reimportation of the Iacchic mysteries, and it is very evident that such stern livers and deep thinkers could not have been contented with a low form of cult. Their influence also spreads far and wide in general Bacchic circles, so that we find Euripides putting the following words into the mouths

of a chorus of Bacchic initiates: 'Clad in white robes, I speed me from the genesis of mortal men, and never more approach the vase of death, for I have done with eating food that ever housed a Soul.'

"When Euxemus asked Appolonius how he would begin his new mode of life he replied: 'As a doctor purges his patients.' Hence he refuses to touch anything that had animal life in it, on the ground that it *densified the mind and rendered it impure*. He considered that the only pure form of food was what the earth produced, fruits, nuts, vegetables. He also abstained from wine, for though it was made from fruit, 'it rendered turbid the aether (mind-stuff) in the Soul,' and 'destroyed the composure of the mind.' Moreover, he went barefoot, let his hair grow long, and wore nothing but linen.

"Naught would he wear that came from a dead beast, nor touch a morsel of a thing that once had life, nor offer it in sacrifice; not for him to stain with blood the altars; but honey-cakes and incense, and the service of his song went upward from the man unto the Gods, for well he knew that they would take such gifts

far rather than the oxen in their hundreds with the knife.

“The refraining from the flesh of animals, however, was not simply based upon the ideas of purity, it found additional sanction in the positive love of the lower kingdoms and the horror of inflicting pain on any living creatures. Thus Appolonius bluntly refused to take any part in the chase, when invited to do so by his royal host at Babylon.”

Enough has been said to teach the student all he needs to know concerning the work. Those that desire to travel the Path can do so. There are those ready to teach them if they are but willing to follow the Path. But as has so often been repeated throughout all our works, it is not an easy one, nor is it strewn with roses.

Lovingly,

R. SWINBURNE CLYMER.

Alchemy and the Alchemists

CHAPTER I.

“The great work is, before all things, the creation of man himself, that is to say, the full and entire conquest of his faculties and his future; it is especially the perfect Emancipation of his Will, assuring him Universal dominion over Azoth and the domain of Magnesia. (The reader will kindly note what has already been stated concerning “Azoth” and “Magnesia”), in other words, full power over the Universal Magical Agent. This Agent, disguised by the ancient Philosophers under the name of First Matter, determines the form of modifiable substance, and we can really arrive by means of it at metallic transmutation and the Universal Medicine. This is not a hypothesis, it is a scientific fact already established and rigorously demonstrated.

“Now, there are two Hermetic operations, the one Spiritual, the other material, and these are mutually dependent. For the rest, all Hermetic science is contained in the Doctrine of Hermes, which is said to

have been originally inscribed upon an emerald tablet. That which is concerned with the Great Work:—
“Thou shalt separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently, with great industry. It rises from earth to heaven, and again it descends to earth, and it receives the power of things above and of things below. By this means shalt thou obtain the glory of the whole world, and all darkness shall depart from thee. It is the strong power of every power, for it will overcome all that is subtle and penetrate all that is solid. Thus was the world created.” To separate the subtle from the gross, in the first operation, which is wholly *interior*, is to set the Soul free from all prejudice and all vice, which is accomplished by the use of the philosophical salt, that is to say, wisdom; of mercury, that is personal skill, and application; finally, of sulphur, representing vital energy and fire of will. By these are we enabled to change into Spiritual gold things which are of all least precious, even the refuse of the earth. In this sense we must interpret the parables of the choir of Philosophers, Bernard Trevisan, Basil Valentine, Mary, the Egyptian, and other prophets of Alchemy; but in

their works, as in the Great Work, we must adroitly separate the subtle from the gross, the Mystical from the positive, allegory from theory. If we would read them with profit and understanding, we must take them first of all as allegorical in their entirety, and then descend from allegories to realities by the way of the correspondences or analogies indicated in the one dogma:—that which is above is proportional to that which is below, and reciprocally. The word *art* when reversed, or read after the manner of sacred primitive characters from right to left, gives three initials which express the different grades of the Great Work. T signifies triad, theory, and travail; R, realization; A, adaptation.

“When the Masters in Alchemy say that a short time and little money are needed to accomplish the works of science, above all, when they affirm that one vessel is alone needed, when they speak of the great and unique Athanor, which all can use, which is ready to each man’s hand, which all possess without knowing it, they allude to Philosophical and mortal Alchemy. As a fact, a strong and determined Will can arrive in a short time at absolute independence, and we are all

in possession of the chemical instrument, the great and sole Athanor which answers for the separation of the subtle from the gross and the fixed from the volatile. This instrument, complete as the world and precise as mathematics, is represented by the sages under the emblem of the pentagram or five-pointed star, which is the absolute sign of human intelligence.”*

Truly Levi has done his best in this, for no Mystic could give a clearer explanation of the Great Work nor write plainer. It has often been stated that Levi was one of the greatest Mystics that the world has ever known and there can be no doubt about it for in the above he has been as plain as it is possible to be in order to state what the Great Work is, no author has ever openly given the *method*.

1. It can hardly be said that there is a doctrine of Hermetic Philosophy; it is properly a *practice*, and it is the practice of truth, justice, goodness, or, in one time-honored word, *virtue*; the *end* being disclosed in the experience of the Adept, but with the continued

*“Transcendental Magic,” E. Levi.

presence of self-appropriation, provided this be under no circumstances compromised.

2. It was no doubt in view of this that Sandivogius was led to express the opinion, that "many men of *good consciences and affections* secretly enjoy this gift of God;" for, it must be admitted, and it is worthy of all thankfulness, that every truly upright man must live, to the extent of his fidelity to the Law of God, under a sense of God's approbation; which may be as good a definition of the Philosopher's Stone as we need have.

3. Merely learned men should know that they have no prescriptive or exclusive right to God's approval; this is the need only of the honest man, whether he be clothed in silken robes or in the humblest apparel of the poor. This is the Elixir and the Water of Life, and the medicine so much talked of under the nature of the Philosopher's Stone,—at least, practically considered; though theoretically it may point to a *special* knowledge of 1, 2, 3, and 1, not to be expressed in words.

4. This being so, we may understand why all of the writers say the profane can not share it; for, in so far

as a man departs from *truth* and rectitude, he departs from paradise.

5. It is a special distinction of this philosophy, that it does not waste its strength upon insoluble problems as to either the origin or the destiny of man; but, taking man as he is, it seizes upon the heart and conscience, and burying itself there, as it were, lives altogether in the effort to purify and perfect this source of the "issues of Life."

6. It need not be imagined that such a doctrine addresses itself to human pride; and power, and presupposes an independent ability in man to sustain and support himself. A very slight acquaintance with this doctrine will show the contrary, and will teach the student that all power is *in* God, which contains the power of man, just as the love of God contains the love of man.

7. The power of man is defined by his knowledge of God,—his acceptance of it, and his submission to it. A right view of this will explain the difference between the power and the weakness of man, the former being measured by reason, and the latter by passion. Reason, in its nature, is above the phenomenal man,

but yet not foreign to the whole man, and may be appropriated by a due submission to it, when, then, it raises man to itself, his proper home; according to the true sense of 1 Cor. xv:43. Passion, on the other hand, it has been well said, manifests the weakness of man; for through it man is under the dominion of agencies in nature, acting blindly and not according to light. Men under such influences are first the dupes of their own passions, and are then prepared to be the dupes of others.

8. It is a noble proposition in a work not yet published in English, though the author has been ignorantly abused in good modern Saxon for some two hundred years, that "we may be determined by reason alone to all of the *actions* to which we are determined by a passion." (Prop. 59, Part 4, of Spinoza's Ethics.) Some men under the influence of passion do the things that reason sanctions, and which, therefore, reason itself may do; but they are, by this author, only called *actions*, as distinguished from *passions*, when done by reason. But reason never sanctions any mere passion, as such; for men under the influence of passion, even when externally the conduct is conform-

able to reason and virtue, always acts blindly, under the control of what the ancient Platonics called out "irascible nature," as something which ought to be "amputated" from us. But the Alchemists would "separate" nothing from the "Matter" proper to its *nature*. They would have everything turned (transmuted) into a "*true salt*;" that is, converted to reason through the conscience, for these two "know and love each other." (John Pontanus.)

9. True power is always exercised in the spirit of Hamlet's advice to the players,—“gently, and with a certain temperance in the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of passion.” The passionless man is not the man of reason;* but he in whom the passions are guided by reason, that is, by reason and Conscience; for, as in God these are one, so in man they should perpetually tend to union, the end and aim of all this doctrine. In the same sense in which the power of man is part of the power of God, and the love of man is part of the love of God, so is the conscience in man a part of the justice of God; and a right understanding of any one of these will explain all.”

“The body which we receive from our parents, and

which is built up from the nutriments it draws directly and indirectly from the earth, has no spiritual powers, for wisdom and virtue, faith, hope, and charity, do not grow from the earth. They are not the products of man's physical organization, but the attributes of another invisible and glorified body, whose germs are laid *within* man. The physical body changes and dies, the glorified body is eternal. The eternal man is the *real* man, and is not generated by his earthly parents. He does not draw nutriment from the earth, but from the eternal invisible source from which he originated. Nevertheless the two bodies are *one*, and man may be compared to a tree, drawing his nutriment from the earth, and from the surrounding air. The roots extend into the earth, and seek their nutriment in the dark, but the leaves receive their nutriment from the light. The temporal body is the home of the eternal, and we should, therefore, take care of it, because he who destroys the temporal body destroys the house of the eternal, and although the eternal man is invisible, he exists nevertheless, and will become visible in time, just as a child in its mother's womb is invisible before it is born, but after

its birth it may be seen by all but those who are blind; and as everything returns after a while to the source from whence it came, so the body returns to the earth and the spirit to heaven or hell. Some children are born from heaven, and others are born from hell, because each human being has its inherent tendencies, and these tendencies belong to his spirit, and indicate the state in which he existed before he was born. Witches and sorcerers are not made at once; they are born with powers for evil (they are born with the tendencies which they acquired in former lives upon the earth, or upon some other planet). The body is only an instrument; if you seek for man in his dead body, you are seeking for him in vain.

“But this physical body, which is believed to be of so little importance by those who love to dream about the mysteries of the spirit, is the most secret and valuable thing. It is the true stone which the builders rejected,’ but which must become the corner-stone of the temple. It is the ‘stone’ which is considered worthless by those who seek for a God above the clouds and reject Him when He enters their house. This physical body is not merely an instrument for

Divine power, but it is also the soil from which that which is Immortal in man receives its strength.

“A seed requires the power of the sunshine to enable it to take from the earth the elements necessary for its growth, and in the same sense the Spiritual body of man, receiving its nutriment from the spirit, could not unfold and develop if it were not for the presence of the physical body of man with its elementary and elemental forces; for the physical body is comparable to the wood from which is produced the fire which gives light; there would be no light if there were nothing to burn. “The more there is wood to burn, the greater will be the combustion, and thus it is with the *Lapis Philosophorum* or *Balsamo perpetuo in corpore humano*.” (A man without sexual power is unfit for initiation.) “But it is not proper to say a great deal about the *Lapis Philosophorum* or to boast about its possession;* the ancients have sufficiently indicated the way for its preparation to those who are not devoid of the *true* understanding; but they have

*See “Divine Alchemy.”

spoken in parables, so that unworthy persons may not know the secret and misuse it.”**

10. Many Alchemists, while indicating the *subject* of their Art in their obscure way, speak of it sometimes as *one*, omitting the word *thing*; then, perhaps, as *two*; then as *three*, and as *four*, and finally as *five*; and yet affirm that there is no contradiction in this. They mean by *one*, the one universal or absolute existence,—which Swedenborg and some other writers have called Substance. By *two* they mean the macrocosm; or they mean the active and passive principles in one nature; or they mean spirit and matter, or Soul and Body, etc. By *three* they add to the two principles a third as the *tie* of the two, in reality the *one*, which, with the two, makes their trinity of principles, 3 in 1. By *four* they usually mean the four so-called elements, earth, water, air, and fire, as if all things in nature were composed of these. By *five* they consider, in addition to the four, a fifth, or quintessence, as the unity of the whole; and this is man, as the “Image of God.”

Concerning this last part, in the “Hermetic Art”

**Hartmann, “Paracelsus.”

we are told that: "The philosophers know well enough that the first study for mankind is Man; to know thyself is to know Nature. To become an adept of power is to possess the Key of all the secrets of Nature, because you possess the Key to your *own* nature."

11. With regard to the four, it should be observed, that it is not important to the theory that there should be just four elements, and no more; so that modern discoveries of more so-called elements do not affect the theory; for the Alchemists all saw that the four elements were not independent of each other; that each contains water, and water air; and, in fact, they expressly say that each contains all the others, in varying proportions. By saying that their subject is four, they only mean to direct attention to nature, though they study nature morally in or through man.

12. Some of the writers speak of the four elements as *natures* capable of passing one into another, from the observation of which some of them took the hint of what they called transmutation. One of them says:

"Those that are ignorant of the causes of things may wonder with astonishment, when they consider that the world is nothing but a continual metamor-

phosis; they may marvel that the seeds of things perfectly digested should end in perfect whiteness. Let the Philosophers imitate nature."

13. This circular operation of nature is now recognized by agricultural chemists, for in the "*Correlation of Physical Forces*," by Mr. Grove (Am. Ed., 1865, P. 19),—"The position which I seek to establish in this Essay is, that the various affections of matter which constitute the main objects of experimental physics, viz., heat, light, electricity, magnetism, chemical affinity, and motion, are all correlative, or have a reciprocal dependence; that neither, taken abstractedly, can be said to be the essential cause of the others, but that either may produce, or be convertible into, and of the others; thus heat may mediate or immediately produce electricity; electricity may produce heat; and so of the rest, each merging itself as the force it produces becomes developed; and that the same must hold good of other forces, it being an irresistible inference from observed phenomena, that a force cannot originate otherwise than by devolution from some pre-existing force or forces."

On page 17, Mr. Grove says, that "The actual priority of cause to effect has been doubted, and their simultaneity argued with much ability."

14. This was undoubtedly the opinion of the Alchemists, and was applied by them to that experience which in the Sacred Scriptures is called the new birth,—by them symbolized under the figure of the Transmutation of metals, which they all speak of as *one operation*.

"Now what is meant by Man and Wife is this:

Agent and patient, *yet not two, but one.*"

They illustrate it by the mingling of sugar with water, in which operation, if it be said that water changes the sugar, with the same reason it may be said that the sugar changes the water; and that there "is but one operation of both." A right conception of this will show how they considered Love as one (thing); and that this Love is the same, whether regarded as the Love of God for man or the Love of man for God; the realization of which is the end of the "Great Work"

Figulus tells us that: "This Spiritual Essence (love), or One Thing, was revealed from above to Adam, and was greatly desired by the Holy Fathers,

this also Hermes and Aristotle call the Truth without Lies, the most sure of all things certain, the Secret of all Secrets. It is the Last and the Highest Thing to be sought under the Heavens, a wondrous closing and finish of Philosophical work, by which are discovered the dews of Heaven and the fastness of Earth. What the mouth of man cannot utter is all found in this spirit. As Morienus says: "He who has this has all things, and wants no other aid. For in it are all temporal happiness, bodily health, and earthly fortune. It is the spirit of the fifth substance, a Fount of all joys (beneath the rays of the moon), the Supporter of Heaven and Earth, the Mover of Sea and Wind, the Outpourer of Rain, upholding the strength of all things, an excellent spirit above Heavenly and other spirits, giving Health, Joy, Peace, Love; driving away Hatred and Sorrow, bringing in Joy, expelling all Evil, quickly healing all Diseases, destroying Poverty and Misery, leading to all good things, preventing all evil words and thoughts, giving man his heart's desire, bringing to the pious earthly honor and long life, but to the wicked who misuse it, Eternal Punishment."

"This is the Spirit of Truth, which the world can-

not comprehend without the interposition of the Holy Ghost, or without the instruction of those who know it. The same is of a mysterious nature, wondrous strength, boundless power. The Saints, from the beginning of the world, have desired to behold its face. By Avicenna this Spirit is named the Soul of the World. For, as the Soul moves all the limbs of the Body, so also does this Spirit move all bodies. And as the Soul is in all the limbs of the Body, so also is this Spirit in all elementary created things. It is sought by many and found by few. It is beheld from afar and found near; for it exists in everything, in every place, and at all times. It has the powers of all creatures; its action is found in all elements, and the qualities of all things are therein, even in the highest perfection. By virtue of this essence did Adam and the Patriarchs preserve their health and live to an extreme age, some of them also flourishing in great riches.

“When the Philosophers had discovered it, with great diligence and labor, they straightway concealed it under a strange tongue, and in parables, lest the same should become known to the unworthy, and the pearls of great price be cast before swine. For if

everyone knew it, all work and industry would cease; man would desire nothing but this one thing, people would live wickedly, and the world be ruined, seeing that they would provoke God by reason of their avarice and superfluity. For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man understood what Heaven hath incorporated with this Spirit. Therefore have I briefly enumerated some of the qualities of this Spirit, to the Honor of God, that the pious may reverently praise Him in His gifts (which gifts of God shall afterwards come to them), and "This Spirit (Love) is the secret, hidden from the beginning, yet granted by God to a few holy men for the revealing of these riches to His Glory—dwelling in fiery form in the air, and leading earth with itself to Heaven, while from its body there flew whole rivers of living waters. This Spirit (Love) flies through the midst of the Heavens like a morning mist, leads its burning fire into the water, and has its shining realm in the heavens."

"And although these writings may be regarded as false by the reader, yet to the Initiated they are true and possible, when the hidden sense is properly under-

stood. For God is wonderful in his works, and his Wisdom is without end."

In accordance with this, we find in "The Hermetic Art" that: "The Philosophers agree with one Voice, that one worthy of this Science must be strictly Virtuous, leading a holy Life, or God will not prosper him. He must have a competent Understanding, or he will not be able to conceive. He must be Diligent and Laborious, or he will not be able to work out what he conceives; and he must be private or he will not quietly enjoy that which he works out. To these must be added Patience and Leisure, together with a Competent Fortune; which is the more necessary in this Study, because it requires, as is already said the whole Man to find out the means, and then a careful Application is Absolutely necessary to "accomplish the Work."

15. It may be desired that some account of the books of the Alchemists should be given beyond what is drawn from the citations made from a few of their writings; but this cannot be done in a brief space as it would take many volumes. If any desire to see an enumeration of their works, the third volume of Du

Fresnoy's "*Historie de la Philosophie Hermetique*" may be consulted, where nearly a thousand authors are named. Of these, it would be idle to imagine that the whole can have value, even supposing the Hermetic Philosophy a substantial reality. If, from the whole number of authors upon the subject, a small number could be selected with judgment, and the remainder laid aside, there would be less difficulty in ascertaining the true ground of procedure, and the nature and extent of the results might be more easily estimated.

16. In the Chronological Table of some of the most distinguished Alchemists (or Hermetic Philosophers), Du Fresnoy enumerates ten before Christ. After Christ, and down to A.D. 1000, he enumerates twenty-one; in the eleventh century he names five; in the twelfth century, only three; but in the thirteenth century, eleven; in the fourteenth, seventeen; in the sixteenth century, thirty; and in the seventeenth century, sixty-seven. But from this list a number of authors must have been omitted.

17. It is remarkable that Plato, in his *seventh letter*, notwithstanding he wrote a great deal himself, says,

that "the truth with respect to 'Nature' 'lies in the smallest compass,' and is of such a character, that 'there is no fear that any one will ever forget it, who has once comprehended it by the soul;' " which may comfort some of us when we feel how impossible it is to read all the books in the world! Plato has taken care to point out the difference between the truth as it is in the soul, and the word, as it is written; that is, between the Law and the command, as we have explained, as may be seen in many places in his Dialogues, especially towards the conclusion of *Phoedrus*.

18. If all the books in the world were to be destroyed, the nature of man would reproduce them, or replace them with others of similar character; and as he who values the creature before the Creator inverts the order of things, so he who prizes human works before the spirit in which they have their birth commits the same error.

19. The Alchemists, or Hermetic Philosophers, appear to have been students of Plato. They quote Aristotle indeed frequently, but it is not certain always that they refer to known works of Alexander's teacher, for it is well understood that many alchemi-

cal works were written under assumed names, or were attributed to men who had attained celebrity in the world. A saying of Aristotle's in regard to one of his works—that it was published and not published, referring to its Hermetic or Esoteric character—might possibly have induced some mystical writers of a later age to affix his name to their works. Be this as it may, the reason for supposing that the Alchemists were students of Plato is not so much derived from references directly to the writings of Plato, as from a similitude of doctrine in some important points.

20. The Alchemists never name their *subject* directly; or, when they do, they tell us that it is to deceive the profane, as when they compare it to *man*; for though man is the real subject of the Art, they pretend that they only speak of him as the subject by comparison or similitude; as may be seen by the passages cited from Flammel. They refer to the *subject* by calling it the *matter*, the *body*, the *two bodies* (soul and body), or they often use the mere pronoun *it*. They will say, for example, in their *receipts*, (which may always be considered *deceits*,) “Take the *matter*, *which you know* (when the general reader knows no-

thing of it), and purify it; you must see that it is perfectly clean, for nothing impure must enter into it," etc. A novice, by such language, is thrown off his guard, and has no idea that the *matter* is *himself*, and that the interpretation is,—If you wish to succeed in this Art, purify yourself; wash you; make you clean, etc.; or, if you wish to improve another, work on the same principles. This is Platonic doctrine, and nothing but plain good sense. It is explained very minutely in the Sophist, where erroneous opinions of all sorts are called "impediments" to true knowledge; and it is said they must be removed, and the person holding them must be "purified," and brought to "shame" with respect to them, before he is in a fit condition to receive true knowledge.

21. This bringing a man to "shame", as Plato calls it, is what the Alchemists call bringing about the *black state of the matter* (*dissolution, calcination, etc.*); and they tell us that it must necessarily precede the *white* state, before the latter can be genuine and bear the test of the fire, (trials of life). This white state, they then say, contains the red state; for they work from within outwards, and deny with the great-

est emphasis that goodness and truth can be put *upon* any one; it must be brought out of the subject, *a la socratic obstetrics* (Theaetetus); on the principle that "nothing can give what it has not." But who can say what man contains, when he sees that the child contains the man?

In the "Great Art" we find this: "The ancient Philosophers concealed the true name of the Matter of the Magnum Opus with as much care as the Modern. They spoke of it only in allegories and symbols. The Egyptians represented it in their hieroglyphics under the form of an Ox, which was at the same time the symbol of Osiris and Isis, (man and woman), whom they supposed to have been brother and sister, husband and wife, both grand-children of the Heaven and Earth. Others have given to it the name of Venus. They have also called it Androgynous, and Andromeda, wife of Saturn, daughter of the god Neptune; Latona, Maya, Semele, Leda, Ceres, and Homer has honored it more than once with the title of Mother of the gods. It has also been known under the name of Rhea, meaning, fusible earth, and finally by an infinity of other feminine names, according to the dif-

ferent circumstances in which it is found in the successive operations of the Work. They personified it, and each circumstance furnished them a subject for numerous allegorical fables, which they invented as seem good to them.

“Hermetic Philosophy wishes that the *Latten* (one which it has also pleased them to give to their Matter), be composed of a gold and silver, crude, volatile, unripe and full of blackness during the putrefaction, which is called *belly of Saturn*, from which Venus was engendered. This is why she is regarded as born of the philosophic sea.

22. It may be imagined that there was nothing in Hermeticism to require or justify so much mystery and secrecy. But no one will hold to this opinion who understands that “*the still, small voice*” has actually more “*pondus*” than can be overcome by the whole world. It was held to be of such importance as to weigh down the entire claims of the external Church of the time. It may be said in some sense always to rise above the age in which a man lives, just as the ideal in all of the arts excels the practical, of which it is the measure.

23. It must be recollected that the Alchemists were Protestants, when Protestantism could not speak openly. Who cannot see—at least when it is pointed out—to what Eyrenaeus refers when he says:

“My heart murmureth things unheard of; my spirit beats within my breast for the good of all *Israel*. These things I send before into the world, like a preacher, that I may not be buried unprofitably in the world. Let my book, therefore, be the *forerunner of Elias*, which may prepare the kingly way of the Lord. I would to God that every ingenious man in the whole earth understood this science: . . . then would virtue, naked as it is, be held in great honor merely for its own amiable nature;”—almost as if the spirit of John the Baptist had warmed him into a prophecy of the full maturity of the Reformation; which is still incomplete, though it has been fermenting and working over three hundred years.

24. My purpose in this work is to show that, notwithstanding there were pretenders and impostors, and freely admitting that multitudes were deceived by the literal signification of the language of the Alchemists, the genuine adepts were in pursuit of

neither wealth nor worldly honors, but were searchers after truth, in the highest sense of this word; and whether we call it truth, virtue, wisdom, religion, or the knowledge of God, one answer will be found to explain all these expressions. This one answer, or one thing, (the one thing needful,) was the Philosopher's Stone, and can be found in no other thing in the universe but the nature of man, made in the Image of God. I repeat here the quotation once quoted before:

“The philosophers know well enough that the *first* study for mankind is Man; to *know thyself* is to know nature. To become an adept of power is to possess the key of all the secrets of nature because you possess the key to your own nature.”

Hence the importance of the maxim, *know thyself*.

“God,” says Pernety, in “The Great Art,” “in materializing Himself, to speak thus, by the Creation of the World, did not think that it was enough to have made such beautiful things. He wished to place upon it the seal of His divinity, and to manifest Himself still more perfectly by the formation of Man. To this end, He made him in His image, and in that of the

World. He gave him a Soul, a Mind and a body; and of these three things, united in the same subject, He constituted Humanity.

“He composed this body of a *clay* extracted from the purest substance of all created bodies. He drew his mind from all that which is most perfect in Nature, and He gave him a soul made by a kind of extension of Himself. It is Hermes who speaks: ‘*Mens, o Tat, ex propria essentia Dei est. Aliqua siquidem est Dei essentia. Qualiscumque tamen ille sit, hoc ipsum sola absolute novit. Mens itaque ab essentiae Dei habitu non est proecisa: Quin etiam velut diffusam solis splendoris instar. Haec autem mens in hominibus quidem Deus est; ea de causa homines dii sunt, ac ipsorum humanitas divinitati est confinis.*’ (Pymand., Cap. II.) The Body represents the sub-lunary world, composed of Earth and Water; it is because of this that it is composed of the dry and humid, or of bone, of flesh and of blood.

“The Mind, infinitely more subtle, holds the middle place between the soul and the body, and serves as a bond to unite them, because one can join two extremes only by a mean. It is this, which by its igneous

virtue, vivifies and moves the body under the direction of the Soul, of which it is the minister; sometimes, rebellious to its orders, it follows its own fantasies and inclinations. It represents the firmanent, the constituent parts of which are infinitely more subtle than those of the Earth and Water. Lastly, the Soul is the Image of God Himself, and the Light of Man.

“The body draws its nourishment from the purest substance of the three kingdoms of Nature, which pass successively from one into the other to end in Man, who is the complement, the end and the epitome.

“Having been made of Earth and Water, it can be nourished only by an analogous substance, that is to say Water and Earth, and it could not fail to resolve into them.

“The Mind is nourished by the Spirit of the Universe and by the quintessence of all that which constitutes it, because it has been made from it. The soul of man communicates with the divine Light from which it derives its origin.

“The preservation of the body is confined *to the mind*. It works *over* the gross nourishment which we take from vegetables and animals, in the laboratories

in the interior of the body. It separates the pure from the impure; it keeps and distributes, through the different circulatory systems, the quintessence analogous to that from which the body has been made, in order to increase its volume, or to maintain it; it rejects the impure and heterogeneous by means destined for this purpose.

“It is the true *Archeus* * of Nature, which Von Helmont, supposes placed in the orifice of the stomach; but of which he seems not to have had a clear idea, since he has spoken of it in such a confused manner as to be almost unintelligible

* The Reader will discover, through the embarrassed manner in which Pernety expresses himself here, that the *Archeus* is the same nervous (?) force which is concentrated in the Solar Plexus, that part of our organism which is the theater of the Occult life of the Initiate. If this be remembered in the volume which is to follow this, the student will then better be able to understand the “Elixir of Youth.”

“This *Archeus* is an igneous principle, the principle of heat, of movement and of Life, which animates bodies and preserves its manner of being as long as the weakness of its organs permit. It is nourished by principles analogous to itself, which it attracts continually by respiration; this is why death succeeds life almost immediately when respiration is intercepted.”

CHAPTER II.

“When a Philosopher adopted as the basis for a new apocalypse of human wisdom the axiom: ‘I think, therefore I am,’ in a measure he unconsciously altered, from the standpoint of Christian revelation, the old conception of the Supreme Being. I am that I am, said the Being of beings of Moses. I am he who thinks, says the man of Descartes, and to think being to speak inwardly, this man may affirm like the God of St. John the Evangelist: I am he in whom and by whom the word manifests—*In principio erat verbum*. Now, what is a principle? It is a groundwork of speech, it is a reason for the existence of the word. The essence of the word is in the principle; the principle is that which is, intelligence is a principle which speaks. What, further, is intellectual light? It is speech. What is revelation? It is also speech; being is the principle, speech is the means, and the plenitude or development and perfection of being is the end. To speak is to create. But to say: ‘I think, therefore I exist,’ is to argue from consequence to

principle, and certain contradictions which have been adduced by a great writer, Lemennais, have abundantly proved the philosophical imperfection of this method. I am, therefore something exists—would appear to us a more primitive and simple foundation for experimental philosophy. I AM, THEREFORE BEING EXISTS. *Ego sum qui sum*—such is the first revelation of God in man and of man in the world, while it is also the first axiom of Occult Philosophy. Being is Being. Hence this philosophy, having that which is for its principle, is in no sense hypothesis or guesswork.

“Mercurius Trismegistus begins his admirable symbol, known under the name of the Emerald Table, by this three-fold affirmation: It is true, it is certain without error, it is of all truth. Thus, in physics, the true confirmed by experience; in philosophy, certitude purged from any alloy of error; in the domain of religion or the infinite, absolute truth indicated by analogy; such are the first necessities of true science, and magic only can impart these to its adepts.

“But you, before all things, who are you, thus taking this work in your hands and proposing to read it?

On the pediment of a temple consecrated by antiquity to the God of Light was an inscription of two words: '*Know Thyself.*' I impress the same counsel on every man when he seeks to approach science. Magic, which the men of old denominated the *sanctum regnum*, the holy kingdom, or kingdom of God, *regnum dei*, exists only for kings and for priests. Are you priests, are you kings? . . . The Priesthood of Magic is not a vulgar priesthood, and its royalty enters not into competition with the princes of *this* world. The monarchs of science are the priests of Truth, and their sovereignty is hidden from the multitude like their prayers and sacrifices. The kings of science are men who know the Truth and the truth has made free, according to the specific promise given by the most mighty of the Initiators." *

1. The genuine Alchemists were not in pursuit of either riches or honors, in a worldly sense. To establish this point, nothing more can be required than a bare perusal of the extracts here furnished from the actual writings of the Alchemists themselves. Those

* E. Levi "Transcendental Magic."

who desire more evidence, and persist in the ordinary opinion must be left in their delusion.

“The Object of the Alchemists was the improvement, and ultimately the perfection of man; and it has been shown that, according to the theory of the writers, this perfection lies in a certain unity, we might say a living sense of the unity, of the human with the Divine nature, the attainment of which can be likened to nothing so well as to that experience known in religion as the *new birth*; (the key also to Dante’s New Life). However much this doctrine may be misunderstood by zealouts on the one side’ and by the worldly-minded on the other.

2. The desired perfection, or unity, is a state of the Soul; a *condition of Being*, and not a mere condition of Knowing.

3. This condition of Being is a Development of the Nature of man from *within*—in some sense unattainable from without, except as external influences may administer occasions for its realization. It is the result of a process or practice, by which whatever is evil in our nature is cast out or suppressed, (under the name of “superfluities,”) and the good thereby al-

lowed opportunity for free activity according to its nature; but as this result is scarcely accessible to the unassisted natural man, and requires the concurrence of Divine power, it is called the gift of God.

“Deep in the nature of every man,” says A. E. Waite, in “Azoth,” “is the Consciousness of powers which remain latent because there is nothing in his external sphere to give a field to their activity. Deep in the heart of every man, there is the consciousness of a better nature, to the Development of which his physical environment is unfavorable. The most sluggish and unspiritual of persons will confess to the possession of aspirations which they would be glad to pursue if it were possible. There is something *within* them which responds to the great and the noble. There are times when the perfect life seems more eminently beautiful than any of the transient pleasures of a selfish and sensuous existence, however much the tinsel of extrinsic attraction may invest such existence with the ornate adornments of earthly joy. We are aware of the stirring *within* us of what seems to be a new faculty, a new power, a new purpose, even a new being. In moments of rare penetration, the outer crust

of our ordinary personality appears to dissolve for a little, and the radiance of an *inner man* transfigures the exterior nature. Something *within* us is attempting to burst forth through the hard and material sheath of our actual form of subsistence and it seems to us that it would be possible, and well if we could, to subsist after another manner.

“This,” say the mystics, “is the motion of the new being *within* the old Adam, as within a womb, and it is only by a moral ordeal, which is akin to the pangs of parturition, that the strong child of the new life (New Birth) can be brought forth. This child is conceived, by the individual being, of the universal Spirit of Life—which is equivalent to saying that its generation is not of this world. It is not of this world in the sense that it is begotten of a spirit which is in antagonism, to the spirit of the world. ‘The prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything,’ says the Christus of the symbolic gospel, speaking in the person of the new age; and the pains of the Spiritual parturition consists in the forcible severance of the bonds which bind the individual to the limitations and imperfections of the old order; these it is torture

to tear asunder because they are the growth of centuries, the strong parasites of environments, and the tendrils of hereditary instincts which have entered into the fibres of our nature. The conception of the new man takes place in mystery because the Consciousness of the life is *within* our life has usually no traceable genesis, whence it is said: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and none can say whence it cometh or whither it goeth: even so is every one who is born of the Spirit.' On the other hand, the nourishment of the germ is a conscious process, and the bursting of the strings, and the breaking of the waters which give passage to the new humanity is accomplished by the individual force of Will. It is in this sense that the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and that the violent bear it away, for the expression is unintelligible when it is applied to the Spiritual world which has been conceived by Christianity, but in its application to the New Life it is appropriate and reasonable.

"We must not, however, be deceived by analogies. The new man is that sub-surface and *interior* nature which is the synthesis of our superior and latent pos-

sibilities. The elements which constitute the germ of the new being exist in all men indifferently, and are not absent from the most depraved of our species. The gestation is the method of life which nourishes the potentialities into activity. The birth is that opening of the old nature which constitutes a severance from its present environment and the creation of a new personal environment which shall give to the new forces a proper sphere of activity. The new being comes not to destroy but to fulfil; the old correspondencies are cut away, a new sequence is formed; the old personality transfigures into the new individual. It is truly a process of unfoldment and of development."

4. Until experienced, the *conditions* of development requires on the part of the philosophic Neophyte something analogous to faith in religion; and because the *conditions* appear to be in contradiction to nature, or within themselves, one with respect to another, the resulting experience is said to be supernatural; but it only appears so when nature is conceived in a narrow sense, under definitions by which nature itself is divided and contemplated in parts, and not as a whole;

but not so when we accept and realize the dogma, that
“Nature contains nature.”

5. If nature be defined the material universe, or universe of matter, then it must be regarded as a blind, inert existence; but if the definition be extended so as to include its life, or power of Being and action, then that which, under the former definition, would be regarded as supernatural must be considered as itself nature; not that what is *actual* in Being can be in any manner affected by arbitrary definitions; but by means of these definitions the mind may be assisted to the formation of clear ideas about what at first we really have only imaginations or notions of, resting upon mere *names* and not *things*. Most men have, of course, notions of what they call *natural* and *supernatural* (the two bodies, of which so much has been said); but before these notions can be transmuted into ideas, they must be temporarily brought into question under a distinct and quite peculiar state of mind, which, itself, not being a result of the will directly, is for this reason alone often considered supernatural, though in the end it is recognized as within nature; or, it may preferably be said, not that the supernat-

ural is brought down to nature, but that nature is elevated into the divine.

6. If the natural and supernatural be treated of by symbols, and called, the one *sulphur* and the other *mercury*, the mind of the student, forced to think of things instead of mere words, may be led finally to conceive the inseparable nature of the two in a certain third something, which, during the progress of the inquiry, may be called *sol*; but as the three are seen to be indissolubly one, the terms may be used interchangeably until, "*after long contemplation of the subject, and living with it, a light is kindled on a sudden as if from a leaping fire, and, being engendered in the soul, feeds itself upon itself.*" (Plato.)

What is this Light? What is the light which must "issue forth" from *within* us to transfigure that which is without us? It is "the light which never was on land or sea," but with which the mind of the poet can illuminate the world around us. It is an emanation from that concentrated center of Nature, which is the inmost of the best of Humanity, where the sun shines at midnight, as the Mystics term it. It is the "glory and the freshness of a dream," but of what

dream? Of that dream which, in the language of the German seer of Fairyland, life is as yet not, but which it ought to become, "and perhaps will" It is the glass in which "the fairy-gifted poet perceives the same thing everywhere." What is this one thing? Ultimately, *it is man*, and the reason is to be found in another poet, whose words we have already cited—"All that interests a man is man." For it is modified in the light that he views it, and is ennobled in proportion as he rises. Here is the *true* key to the Transfiguration of the Cosmos which surrounds us. The universe is fashioned in strict correspondence with the moral and intellectual status of the mind which perceives it. It is blank to the man who is personally devoid of soul; it is cold to him who is deficient in "the fire within;" it is dead to him who is himself without life. To the savage it is, in the main, dark, arbitrary, forbidding, remorseless, fearful; to the blood-guilty, it is "red in tooth and claw," and "with raving shrieks against the creed" of long-suffering, patience, and mercy; to the pessimist, it is hopeless and evil; to the selfish it is the reign of might, and its law is *sauve qui peut*. To the peacemaker, it is

a continual Sabbath, in which he "possesses the land," and his reward is with him. To the just, it is the ultimate triumph of law and order, and to this extent it is already "the Kingdom of Heaven" which is promised him. To the poet, it is the source and the field of his inspiration, and the fountain of his thirst for the good, the beautiful, and the true. It is rendered to every man according to his nature, nor can it be said of this or of that view that it is alone the true one, for the view is in the beholder, and the standpoint is the prerogative of the person who is in possession of it. We are in need of a new focus to obtain an improved view, of a new elevation to enlarge the field of vision, of a new mind to evolve a new medium wherein to view it. This is neither the creation of a romantic delusion, nor of an arbitrary and partial attitude. The development of the powers and prerogatives of the *interior* man will constitute an instrument by which he will be placed in correspondence with the Higher Laws of the Universe, and this will be the beginning of a new heaven and a new earth, because the "former things" will have passed away. The difference which subsists between Nature and

humanity as they are presented in actual life, and as they are presented in the light of the poet, comprises the whole range of the difference between the present imperfect correspondence of man with the universe, and that adjustment which constitutes the perfect life. An instance may be legitimately taken from one of the humbler walks of poetry to which we shall have occasion for another reference. Let us recall one of the innumerable rhymes and roundelays which have been written in praise of a country life, and of one of its special features, as, for instance, the time of harvesting, and let us analyze the elements which compose it. What is the chief feature of this or that description? It is the elevation of the actual into the ideal, and its transfiguration in the glass of vision and ecstasy. It does not correspond to reality because it has worked upon reality the transmutation of the light which is *Azoth* in the terminology of the Alchemists. The transformation has been accomplished by a process of refinement which has left the dregs and the sediments at the bottom of the Chalice of Life. Once more, and also in the language of the Alchemists, the gross has been separated from the subtle, and the work has been com-

pleted simply by the rejection of something "superfluous," which is the littleness, the common-place, the baseness, and the meanness that narrow and distort our present form of subsistence. In poetry the sense of enchantment is lent by distance. If we advance nearer to the field of toilers, we shall see and hear that which will break the spell, and the dreamer will be cruelly disillusioned. When we can advance nearer without disenchantment, and take part in the vintage, we may look to drink new wine in the Kingdom of the Father. When we can share in "the reaping and the mowing" without endangering the poetry of life, we may look to walk with God among the sheaves in the cool of the evening, and to "make merry and rejoice with exceeding great joy in the harvest home of the Golden Age."

"Along such lines we propose the Development of the perfect woman and the perfect man. At our back is the wisdom of the ages. We are the lawful descendants of Magi, Gymnopsists, Platonists, Theurgists; Egypt, Greece, and Chaldea, Aeonian India and far Cathay—of all these we are the heirs. We have their literature to help us in the grand construction, which may after all be a reconstruction. We have the process of Alchemy to help us. We have all dream and

all legend and all poetry in harmony with the mystic dream, the mystic legend, and the poetry of mysticism. We have also all religion, because whether it be mysticism, legend, dream, poetry, or religion, the universal subject is *still man*. And it is *man in Alchemy—man the distiller, man the thing distilled, man is the vessel and the alembic*. The vision expands before us. All forces of imagination and aspiration collected from all these quarters centre for the elaboration of the man and woman of the future. We have Hermes and Apollo, the celestial Son of the Sun, Chrishna and Osiris. We have the Virgin Mother, the first-begotten Maid of Majesty and Wisdom, Isis and Hrania. Aphrodite, the higher Venus, the Lady Lucifera, the Regina Coeli, Pallas, and Diana the Unveiled. Let us pause for a moment on the prospect. We look to see the manifested glory, majesty, intelligence, beauty, and royal apex of perfection outlined and adored in all these symbols walking this green earth. And that prospect can be actualized by the processes of mysticism. Were such a splendid and many-tinted Iris of supreme promise—were this “floral arch of Paradise”—but a romantic lie, or merely the heroism of a dream, the

world's good would be achieved by working towards it. But it is not a lie—by the love of Jesus and the bond of the Brotherhood of Buddha, all aspiration, all poetry, all religion assert it. The resurrection of the righteous asserts it, the promise of the millennium includes it, the transfiguration of Christ pre-realized it; modern psychology proves it with the possibilities it has opened in the higher phenomena of mesmerism, clairvoyance, and spiritism. Magic also proves it—that dread, unfathomed mystery of past achievements in arcane experiments. And as there is a light of the physical world, but also a light of mind; a light of physical beauty and a supreme illumination of intelligence; so it is in the ultimate ends of these final splendors that we shall look for the accomplishment of the two sides of the *Magnum Opus* the Great Work of the Light, the illumination of the new age, the incandescent splendor of perfection, the brightness of the true, intimate life in the deep heart of Nature in touch with the heart of God.’’*

7. Those who have never had the experience are apt

*“Azoth, or, the Star in the East,” A. E. Waite.

to decry this as imaginary; but those who enter into it know that they have entered into a higher life, or feel enabled by it to look upon things from a higher point of view. To use what may seem a misapplication of language—it is a supernatural birth, *naturally entered upon*; it is the New Birth of the Scriptures, brought about supernaturally *according to Nature*.

8. In excuse for this language I would ask any one to weigh carefully the treatment of this subject by an eminent divine, and observe how language struggles in vain to escape the difficulties of it. As an example at hand, I will refer to the “*Select Discourses*” of the Rev. John Heylyn, D.D. (London, 1760),—the Discourse in Conversation,—an excellent work.

The text is from Zechariah i:3: *Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you.*

9. In the treatment of this text, the writer labors under insuperable difficulties from the impossibility of avoiding the seeming contradiction, wherein it is required of man, as a condition of God’s turning to him, that man shall turn to God; while yet this turning of man to God is not possible, but by the power of God in man.

10. We find in this discourse the prayer, very ap-

propriately introduced: *Turn thou us, O Lord, and so shall we be turned*; which presents directly the antagonism visible in the text.

11. The same antagonism is brought out by two other passages from Scripture: *Him who cometh to me, I will not reject, I will in no wise cast out*. This supposes a natural power in man so to "come;" but then we read that *No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him*, which affirms an impossibility in the natural man to move without supernatural help.

12. Let these two seemingly opposite or contradictory conditions be examined under any symbolic names the student pleases, the seeker keeping his *intent* upon things, and not words, and they may finally become reconciled in a certain third something, which shall be as the unity of the two, when all becomes clear.

13. As another example from Dr. Heylyn, consider the following passage: "In strict reasoning, perhaps we ought not to ascribe locality to the Deity. *Human language cannot treat of God but with great improprieties*. Yet to say that we must seek God *within* ourselves, *in our hearts*, is in some respects a proper way of speaking, because it is a proper way of con-

ceiving about God. God is in the Heavens, and above all Heavens: He is also in every tree, and plant, and stone, as verily as He is in the heart of man: He is in every other man's heart, as well as in ours. But seeing he is *within us*, we ought not to seek him *without us*. *He is a God near at hand, and not afar off.* Jer. xviii. He is indeed both near and afar off by his ubiquity or omnipresence; but inasmuch as concerns us, inasmuch as He is *our* God, He is near us. *He is in us."*

14. In this passage the word heart is figuratively used, and can only mean *that* (whatsoever it be) which may witness to us the presence of God in us. Our familiarity with this expression makes us feel, in the use of it, as if we knew all about it, though in truth we may know very little or nothing about it. The Alchemists symbolize something similar by the expressions *philosophical mercury*, and *philosophical gold*, the one being something in a man, the other something in God, which are ultimately conceived as "one only thing." When the soul is in the right state for asking itself the question, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" it will know the mystery.

15. By symbolism the Alchemists escape, or en-

deavor to escape, the difficulty of treating the subject in ordinary language; for the meaning of the terms employed must be sought in the nature of things, or, as they warn us, must be tested by "the possibility of nature." They tell us, that whoever departs from nature is lost, and must commence his work anew. "Whoever is without the bounds of nature," says Espagnet, "is in error, or near one."

16. No language can grapple with the difficulties of this subject, and its use is calculated to throw a stumbling-block in the way of the honest inquirers, while it furnishes a pretense to those who are disposed to cavil, and who think more of being subtle about words than of realizing the truth of things. But by symbolism these difficulties may *to some extent* be overcome; and this, too, without real injury to the student, who is perpetually cautioned by the Alchemists to accept only the truth, which he must test by a certain *infallible rule*. (Thess. v:27.)

17. It is true that here we encounter the very same difficulty in another form; for this *rule* is that very *truth* itself which the student is supposed to be seeking.

18. How, then, is the difficulty said to be overcome?

We say *to some extent*; for, as by the literal language of symbolism no sense is attainable, or a very trivial one only, the student escapes the danger of being led to *fancy* that, by passing his eyes over a mere collocation of words, he has reached what Plato calls "the very wise thing itself;" and then, being driven back upon nature and himself, he may find what he seeks; or, rather, he is rewarded according to what he seeks; *with the truth*, if that be his object, pursued with a "single eye;" but if his eye be double, he finds nothing, for, in this case he deserves nothing from the art. At the worst, if the student understands the works literally, reading with a double eye, he misses indeed the wealth, the wisdom, which by supposition he is not seeking; but by experiments upon metals in pursuit of merchantable gold, instead of treasures not to be purchased, he unconsciously promotes the useful science of chemistry, and so illustrates the beneficence of Providence in bringing good out of all things.

In a tract entitled "Glory of the World," we find the following instructions concerning the Alchemical art:

"A spirit is within, which by deliberate skill you must separate from the body. Simply disjoin the

material part from the vapor. You should then add the cold water of the spring. With this you should unweariedly sprinkle both. You will then have the true Elixir of our art.

“I would warn all and sundry, but especially you, my beloved disciples, in clear and impressive language, to be on your guard against all fantastical teachings, and listen to the truthful information which I shall now proceed to give you.

“In the first place, you must give a wide berth to the false Alchemy of the vulgar herd. I have experienced this so much that I am loathe to recommend any to undertake the work, since the art is so well hidden that no mortal on earth can discover it *unless Sol and Luna meet*. (See first two volumes for clear explanation of terms.) If you give diligent heed to my warning you may attain to a knowledge thereof, but if you do not, you will never approach any nearer to it. Know also that there is only one thing in the whole world that enters into the composition of the stone, and that, therefore, all coagulation and admixture of different ingredients would show you to be on a wrong scent altogether. If you could perform all the different operations of our art all your dis-

solving, coagulation, decomposition, distilling, augmenting, albefying, etc., would be useless without a true knowledge of our matter. For our art is good and precious, nor can anyone become a partaker of it unless it be revealed to him by God, or unless he be taught by a skilled master.

“It is a treasure such as the whole world cannot buy. Do not, therefore, my sons, spend your toil until you know what that is on which you are to operate. For even if you knew the right matter, your information would be useless to you without a knowledge of the method of preparing it. The stone in its final and effective form is not to be found anywhere in the whole world, either in the heavens above or in the earth beneath; nor in any metal, nor in anything that grows, nor yet even in gold or silver. *It must be prepared, that is, developed into its final form;* yet, for all that, it cannot, strictly speaking, be made better than God created it, nor can the tincture be prepared out of it: the “tincture” must be added to it, and therefore has nothing to do with our main object, since it is a different thing altogether. If it were in any metal, we should surely have to look for it in the sun or moon; yet the moon cannot contain it, or it would

long since have become the sun. Neither is it in mercury, or in any sulphur, or salt, or in herbs, or anything of that nature, as you shall see hereafter." Truly the author could hardly speak plainer.

19. In reading a work written in symbols, the student is forced to consider things, and not words; and this allows his real desire (love, or purpose) to work itself out according to its essential nature. If this *essence* of the man, as Swedenborg calls it, is of the "superior" nature, "it produces that good from itself which it supposes it finds." By this process the student may be led into the right position for receiving a *certain experience*, which becomes as a light in the soul for the explanation of what seems contradictions to the "natural man." But they only appear to be contradictions because of the absence of the experience; somewhat as other experiences may be regarded as revelations and supernatural prior to their realization in life. Thus, the whole of life is supernatural to the helpless infant; not so much to the youth, in whom the powers of nature have begun to unfold themselves; while to the sage, "the common has become extraordinary, the extraordinary com-

mon," and God is recognized in all things; for to the sage all things are "full of God."

20. When the student, or more properly the "seeker," is in a right state for the reception of this experience,—for it has its fitting time and requires its suitable conditions, like all other things,—the light comes to him, or rather rises *within* him; but as if from without, and may be said to be both natural and supernatural. The *sulphur* and *mercury* becomes one, or are seen to be the same, differing only in a certain relation; somewhat as the known and the unknown are but one, the unknown decreasing as the known increases, and *vice versa*. (John xxx:50.)

21. The general reader may be reminded, by what is said of experience, of the very profound definition, to wit, that *experience is that which one experiences when he experiences his experience*. But a downright experience is not to be put out of countenance by a witticism, though from the monarch of modern literature, Goethe himself.

"Internal illumination," says Menzel, "which, though the fruit of long preparation, yet remains an involuntary one, is a matter of fact, on which no false system or irrational claims should be founded: which

should by no means be put to an ill use, but which yet can by no means be reasoned away;" and what is more, it cannot even be ridiculed away. Locke tried his reason upon it, and Butler his wit; but the *thing* remains, upon which, it is admitted, no false systems nor irrational claims should be founded: this does not exclude inquiry about it, but rather invites it; for as a single fact it is the most extraordinary thing in nature, and is by some considered supernatural.

22. Of course the use of the mere figurative word *light* can teach nothing, and must be understood in regard to this subject as in respect to others, where we speak of the *light* of knowledge, the light of the understanding, and as it is used in the Psalms, *in thy light we see light*, which means, in thy truth shall we see truth; or, in other words, we know we have the truth when we realize it as in God, which follows readily when we understand in what sense God is said to be Truth. Whoever sees the truth of a proposition, even of mathematics, as, that a sphere is two-thirds of its circumscribing cylinder, may form some notion of the light in question; which teaches the relation of man to God, where the proposition takes precedence of all conceivable questions. For this reason, a sense of its so-

lution must be realized as the purest and highest attainable light, the sum and centre of light."

"According to Robert Fludd, the soul of the world is a pure spirit of universal nature, formed and vivified by rays of divine light, emanating directly from the Eternal Monad, and reduced with these by the union of holy love into a living and spiritual nature:

Love is warmth, and wisdom light—

These are God's interpreters.

So also in the arcane revelations, the Divine Mind appears out of the profound deeps, replete with glory and serenity. After the first wanderings of the mysteries, the coruscation of a sudden splendor displays itself before the eyes of the mystae, and shining plains open on all sides before them. Light is the key to knowledge; it is everywhere identified with life; it produces life and motion; it is the archa, or rainbow arch of beauty. The golden egg out of which Brahma was produced blazed like a thousand suns.

"For the typology of sunset clouds, for the splendors of celestial incandescence, for the poetry of light in Nature, we must see that light figures as the first matter of the *Magnum Opus*. It is the ignited stone, and the fiery chariot of Alchemical symbolism; it is

the substance of the Philosopher's Stone. In religion, in ritual, and in folk-lore, it has ever played a part of the first importance. We shall find it figuring suggestively in dream and legend. The imagination itself is a light. Light is essential to all operations of magic. It is the one thing needful. It is, in particular, inseparably connected with every conception of the future glory, beauty, and perfection of humanity; and it may be reasonably submitted that this universal reaching out of aspiration indicates a truth to come, is the sign of a fact which will be realized, namely, that the hope of the Hermetists is a possible and desirable thing, and that we may look for the physical bloom and garment of light, for a coming radiance in humanity, for the evolution of the Lords of Glory. The expectation is at once symbolical and literal; and just as the exterior light would be an unsubstantial ravishment if there were no life *within* so is the interior light, so is the interior beauty, the fountain and source of the external. Any ideal system of education towards the perfect life must foster both—the evolution of physical radiance and beauty, the evolutions of interior charms, for the production of that which shall be the desire of

all eyes, the perfect phenomenal expression of a perfect intrinsic truth. It is a process of the eternal ages. Mysticism can offer no transfiguration which shall take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. It is a far off and divine event, but all creation is moving towards it; and if we will, each successive generation may be a step farther on the road, till at length we shall in truth behold

The spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl,

and all "four spaces clothed in living beams," when man is at one with his environments, and the world dissolved with man in a common glory. It is not too hard a task; it is not too long a strife; it is not too severe an education. It is a long beatification of endeavor closing in a splendor of fulfillment. Our method is contained in a short phrase—to beautify; to beautify mind and form; to beautify soul and body; to beautify thought, and word, and deed; to beautify dream and aspiration, to beautify imagination and fancy; to beautify philosophy and religion; to beautify

birth, bridal and burial; to beautify life in all its relations, all man, and all his circumstances.'''*

23. The importance attached to the personal state and purpose of the student is urged by these writers in the strongest manner. He is warned again and again to consider well what he seeks; for as everything has its proper cause, so things have also their proper effects, and the whole of nature is contained or expressed in some sense in these two dogmas; and yet, while each particular thing may be regarded as a single fact, from one point of view, it represents, from another point of view, an unvarying principle. Hence one of the writers says:

“Thus, though I have somewhat metaphorically deciphered our true principles, yet I have done it so plainly that, with diligence, you may understand the meaning; and unless you know this, you will proceed blindfolded in your work, not knowing the cause of things, so that every puff of sophisters will toss you, as a feather is tossed in the air with a blast of wind; for *our books are full of obscurity*: Philosophers write

*“Azoth, or, the Star in the East,” A. E. Waite.

horrid metaphors and riddles to those who are not upon a sure foundation, which like to a running stream will carry them down headlong into error and despair, from which they can never escape till they so far understand our writings as to discern the subject-matter of our secrets; which being known, the rest is not so hard. Proceed, therefore, not one step farther until you have learned this lesson, namely, to wed consanguinity with consanguinity (i. e., like nature with like nature), and consider well what it is you *desire* to produce, and according to that let be your intention. *Take the last thing in your intention for the first thing in your principles*.....Attempt nothing out of its own nature (telling us, as usual, that grapes are not gathered from thistles, etc.).....If you apprehend this in its cause aright, and know how to apply this doctrine in your operation as you ought, you will find great benefit, and a door will hereby be opened to the discovery of greater mysteries."

24. The direction here given, to take the last *intention* for the first principle, (in the pursuit of truth,) is full of sound philosophy, though certainly a very simple thing in itself. It only means that a student

should distinctly understand his ultimate purpose, there being a wide difference in the *state* of the individual who seeks what he seeks as an end, or as a means to an end. To seek knowledge for riches, is a very different thing from seeking riches (or independence) as an instrument of knowledge. In the study in question, the means and the end must coincide; that is, the truth must be sought for itself only, and not as a means to another thing, not even for salvation.

25. To repeat—the instrument of preparation in the work of Alchemy is the conscience, called by a thousand names, by means of which,—become active as in the presence of God—the matter of the stone (the man) is first purified before it is possible for the truth to be realized. By a metonymy the conscience itself is said to be purified, though in fact the conscience needs no purification, but only the man, to the end that the conscience may operate freely. The conscience under the name of a middle substance, (in the language of the jargon,) is said to partake of an *azurine* sulphur, that is, of a *heavenly* spirit, or in other words of the spirit of God. It is this which we

are cautioned in a volume of universal authority not to grieve away.

26. Man first hears the voice of God in the conscience (or he hears the conscience in the garden), the *still, small voice*, which, though often unheeded, is in Alchemy, as well as in the Scriptures, compared to a *fire*: *Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord.* Jer. xxiii.

29. This prepares the way for what many of the writers speak of as a *light*, the reference to which is so curiously wrapt up in figures and symbols, that I will cite an entire chapter on the subject, as a curious specimen of the symbolic mode of writing.

CHAPTER III.*

"Of the Regimen of Sol."

"Now art thou drawing near to the close of thy work, and hast almost made an end of this business; all appears now like unto a pure *gold*; and the *Virgin's Milk*, with which thou imbibest this matter is very citrine. (I Cor. iii:2. The conscience is very sound and healthy.)

"Now to God, the giver of all good, you must render immortal thanks, who hath brought this work so far; and beg earnestly of him, that thy counsel mayest hereafter be so governed, that thou mayest not endeavor to hasten thy work; so as to lose all, now it is so near to perfection: consider that thou hast waited now about seven months, (the time is indefinite,) and it would be a mad thing to annihilate all in one hour: therefore be thou very wary; yea, so much the more by how much thou art nearer to perfection.

"But if thou proceed warily in this regimen, thou shalt meet with these notable things (experiences,

*From "*Secrets Revealed*," by Eyrenaeus.

symbolized, of an entrance into the higher light or life) : first, thou shalt observe a certain citrine sweat to stand upon thy body ; and after that citrine vapor, then shall thy body below be tintured of a *violet* color, with an obscure *purple* intermixed. (When these works were written, physicians were in the habit of judging of the condition of their patients by the appearance of a certain water, a citrine color indicating a healthy condition—here intended to signify the *moral* condition of the *matter* of the stone:—*violet* is the symbol of love, and *purple* of immortality,—which are beginning to dawn upon the man in this stage of the work:—but to proceed.) After fourteen or fifteen days' expectation in this regimen of Sol, thou shalt see the greatest part of thy matter humid (submissively yielding,—not by any force of will, but by a much more irresistible constraint, acting yet sweetly and not violently), and although it be very ponderous (self-willed), yet it will ascend in the belly of the wind. ('But when they arise or ascend,' says Artephius, referring to the soul and body of the one man, 'they are born or brought forth in the air or spirit, and in the same they are changed, and made life with life, so that they can never be separated, but are as water mixed

with water. And therefore it is wisely said, *the stone is born of the spirit*, because it is altogether spiritual.’)

“At length, about the twenty-sixth day of this regimen, it will begin to dry; and then it will liquefy and recongeal, and will grow liquid again an hundred times in a day (fluctuate between hopes and fears, assurances and doubts; some of the writers say that, in this stage of the work, the *matter* will put on all the colors in the world, etc.), until at the last it will begin to turn into grains, and sometimes it will seem as if it were all *discontinuous* in grain, and then it will grow into *one mass* again: and thus it will put on innumerable forms in one day: and this will continue for the space of about two weeks.

“At the last, by the will of God, *a light shall be sent upon thy matter, which thou canst not imagine.*

“Then expect a sudden end which within three days thou shalt see; for thy matter shall *convert* itself into grains, as fine as the atoms of Sol, and the color will be the highest red imaginable, which for its transcendent redness will show blackish, like unto the purest blood when it is congealed.

“*But thou must not believe that any such thing can*

be an exact parallel of our Elixir, for it is a marvelous creature, not having its compare in the whole universe, nor anything exactly like it."

Descriptions similar to this may be found in all of the writings of the Alchemists in best repute among themselves. The author of the above wrote a commentary upon Sir Geo. Ripley's "Compound of Alchemy," expressly, as he tells us, that the reader might have the testimony of two combined. In this commentary may be found the following passages:

"In the beginning, therefore, of our work, through the co-operation of heat (nature), both internal and external, and the moisture of the *matter* concurring, our body gives a blackness like unto pitch, which for the most part happens at forty, or at most in fifty days. (This may mean years.)

"This color discovers plainly that the two natures are united. (By these *two* natures, the reader surely understands by this time, are meant what are called by innumerable names, Sol and Luna, gold and silver, heaven and earth, Phoebus and Daphne, superior and inferior, soul and body, etc.) And if they are united, they will certainly operate one upon the other, and alter and change each other from thing to thing, and

from state to state, until all come to one nature and substance regenerate, which is a new heavenly body.

“But before there can be this renovation, the old man must necessarily be destroyed, (Eph. iv:22-24, and Col. iii:8, 10,) that is, thy first body must rot and be corrupted, and lose its form, that it may have it repaid with a new form, which is a thousand times more noble. So then our work is not a forced nor an apparent, but a natural and radical operation, in which our natures are altered perfectly, in so much that the one and the other, having fully lost what they were before, yet without change of kind (without an absolute change of substance) they become a third thing, homogeneous to both the former.

“Thus, they who sow in tears shall reap in joy; and he who goeth forth mourning, and carrying precious seed, shall return with an abundance of increase, with their hands filled with sheaves, and their mouths with the praises of the Lord. Thus the chosen or redeemed of the Lord shall return with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, and sighing and sorrows shall fly away.

“Remember, then, this alchemic maxim, that *a sad,*

cloudy morning begins a fair day and a cheerful noon-tide; for our work is properly to be compared to a day, in which the morning is dark and cloudy, so that the sun (the truth) appears not. After that, the sky is overclouded, and the air cold with northerly winds, and much rain falls, which endures for its season; but after that the sun breaks out, and shines more and more, till all becomes dry; and then at noonday not a cloud appears, but all is clear from one end of the heaven to the other."

Here the author introduces cautions against haste and over-anxiety, advising patience, and proceeds:

"Then shalt thou have leisure to contemplate these wonders of the Most High, and if they do not ravish and astonish thee in beholding them, *it is because God hath not intended this science for thee in mercy, but in judgment*. Remember, then, when thou shalt see the renewing of these natures, that with humble heart and bended knees thou praise and extol and magnify that gracious God, who hath been nigh unto thee, and heard thee, and directed thine operations, and enlightened thy judgment; for certainly flesh and blood never taught thee this, but it was the free gift of that

God who giveth to whom he pleaseth. John iii:8. This is the highest perfection to which any sublunary body can be brought, by which we know that God is one, for God is perfection:—to which, whenever any creature arrives in its kind (according to its nature), it rejoiceth in unity, in which there is no divison nor alterity, but peace and rest without contention.....

“This is the last and noblest conjunction, in which all the mysteries of this microcosm have their consummation. This is by the wise called their Tetrap-tive conjunction wherein the *Quadrangle* is reduced to a *Circle*,* in which there is neither beginning nor end. He that hath arrived here, may sit down at banquet with the Sun and moon. This is the so highly com-mended *Stone* of the wise, which is without all fear or corruption.....

“And this work is done without any laying on of hands and very quickly, when the matters are pre-pared and made fit for it. This work is therefore called a divine work.”

*The four elements of nature are seen running into each other, so that they constitute a circle.

In the commentary upon the Fifth Gate of Ripley, the author, taking up the work in its more advanced state, says:

“Thy earth (meaning *thyself*, addressing the seeker,) then being renewed, behold how it is decked with an admirable *green* color, which is then named the Philosopher’s Vineyard. This *greenness* (the indication of Spring), after the perfect *whiteness*, is to thee a token that thy *matter* (thyself again) hath re-attained, through the will and power of the Almighty, a new vegetative life: observe then how this Philosophical Vine (thyself still) doth seem to flower, and to bring forth tender green clusters; know then that thou art now preparing for a rich vintage. (Col. i:10.)

“Thy stone (thyself) hath already passed through many hazards, and yet the danger is not quite over, although it be not great; for thy former experience may now guide thee, if rash joy do not make thee mad.

“Consider now that thou art in process to a new work; and though in perfect *whiteness* thy stone was incombustible, yet in continuing it on the fire without moving, it is now become tender again: therefore,

though it be not in so great a danger of fire now as heretofore, yet immoderacy may and will certainly spoil all, and undo thy hopes: govern (thyself, understood) with prudence, therefore, while these colors shall come and go, and be not either over-hasty, nor despondent, but wait the end with patience.

“For in a short time thou shalt find that this *green* will be overcome with *Azure*; and that, by the pale color, which will at length come to a citrine; which citrine shall endure for the space of forty-six days. (An indefinite time.)

“*Then shall the heavenly fire descend, and illuminate the earth* (thyself) *with inconceivable glory*; the crown of thy labors shall be brought unto thee, when our *Sol* shall sit in the south, shining with redness incomparable.

“This is our true light, our earth glorified: rejoice now, for our king (the man) hath passed from death to life, and possesseth the keys of both death and hell, and over him nothing now hath power. (Rev. i:18.)

“As then it is with those who are redeemed, their Old Man is crucified, wherein is sorrow, anguish, grief, heart-breaking, and many tears; after which the New

Man is restored, wherein is joy, shouting, clapping of hands, singing, and the like; for the ransomed of the Lord shall return with songs, and everlasting joy shall be on their heads: even so is it after a sort (the author means, precisely after this sort) in our operations; for of all our old body dieth and rots, and is, as it were, corrupted, engendering most venomous exhalations, which is, as it were, the purgatory of this old body, in decoction. And when it is once purged, and made clean and pure, then are the elements joined, and make one perfect, perpetual, indissoluble unity; so that from henceforth there is nothing but concord and amity to be found in all our habitations.

“This is a noble step, from hell to heaven; from the bottom of the grave to the top of power and glory; from obscurity in blackness to resplendent whiteness; from the height of venomosity to the height of medicine. O Nature! how dost thou alter things into things, casting down the high and mighty, and again exalting them from lowliness and humility! O Death! how art thou vanquished when thy prisoners are taken from thee, and carried to a state and place of immortality! This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.” (Ps. cxviii:23.)

27. The author then proceeds to illustrate the necessity of alternate action upon natural bodies, before they can be prepared for a change of nature: they must be exposed to "heat" and "cold," must be "dried" and "watered" (prospered and saddened), in order to be made pliable and yielding, etc., all of which must be done with one fire, which he immediately calls the "*spirit* proper to it," and then tells us that the wise men have called it their *Venus*, or *Goddess of Love*, and says:

"Proceed, therefore, not as a fool, but as a wise man; make the water of thy compound (thine own spirit) to rise and circulate, so long and often that the soul, that is to say, the most subtle virtue of the body, arise with it, circulating with the Spirit in manner of a fiery form, by which both the spirit and body are enforced to change their color and complexion: for it is this soul of the *dissolved* bodies which is the subject of wonders; it is the life, and therefore quickens the dead; it is the vegetative soul, and therefore it makes the dead and sealed bodies, which in their own nature are barren, to fructify and bring forth.....

"Make sure of thy true matter, which is no small thing to know, and though we have named it, yet we

have done it so cunningly, that, if thou wilt be heedless, thou mayest sooner stumble at our books than at any thou ever didst read in thy life. Meddle with nothing out of kind (out of species or nature), whether salts (generally called corrosives) or sulphur, or whatever is of like imposition; and whatever is alien from the perfect metals (foreign to our nature) is *reprobate in our mastery*. Be not deceived neither with receipts or discourse, for we verily do not intend to deceive thee; but if you will be deceived, be deceived."

28. These writers have a favorite saying that *receipts are deceits*, and yet their books are filled with them; but their receipts deceive no one who proceeds so far in the knowledge of their Art as to understand that it is not a work of the hands, but one of thought and meditation, with which the life must be kept in unison; for it is the destruction of the whole work not to have the thought and deed keep company, insuring in the end a perfect union of the intellect and will; for Sol and Luna must be indissolubly joined, and when this is done by nature, no art can separate them.

As to the will and reason or intellect, E. Levi tells us that: "Supreme intelligence is *necessarily* reasonable. God, in philosophy, may be only a hypothesis,

but he is a hypothesis imposed by good sense on human reason. To personify the absolute reason is to determine the divine ideal. Necessity, liberty, and reason—these are the great and supreme triangle of the Kabbalists, who name reason Kether, necessity Chochmah, and liberty Binah, in their first divine triad. Fatality, will, and power, such is the magical triad, which corresponds in things human to the divine triad. Fatality is the inevitable sequence of effects and causes in a determined order. Will is the directing faculty of intelligence forces for the conciliation of the liberty of persons with the necessity of things. Power is the wise application of will which enlists faculty itself in the accomplishment of the desires of the sages. When Moses smote the rock, he did not *create* the spring of water, he *revealed* it to the people, because occult science had made it known to himself by means of the divining rod. It is in like manner with all miracles of magic; a law exists, which is ignored by the vulgar and made use of by the initiate. Occult laws are often diametrically opposed to common ideas. For example, the crowd believes in the sympathy of things which are alike and in the hostility of things contrary, but it is the opposite

which is the true law. It used to be affirmed that nature detests the void, but it should be said that nature desires it, were the void not, in physics, the most irrational of fictions. In all things the vulgar mind habitually takes shadow for reality, turns its back upon light, and is reflected in the obscurity which it projects itself. The forces of nature are at the disposal of one who knows how to resist them. Are you master sufficiently of *yourself* to be never intoxicated? Then will you direct the terrible and fatal power of intoxication. If you would make others drunk, possess them with the desire of drink, but do not partake of it yourself. That man will dispose of the love of others who is master of his own. If you would possess, do not give. The world is magnetised by the light of the sun, and we are magnetised by the astral light of the world. That which operates in the body of the planet repeats itself in us. Within us there are three analogical and hieratrichic worlds, as in all nature."

"The secret of comprehension in the soul is that also of a common comprehension in the psychic potencies of the unseen. It is the entrance into the spiritual body which is the Church of Christ. It is

the guarantee of communication with the Sacred and Holy Assembly. It is not a communication of persons, but an *interior union*, and its fruition is the Spirit of Christ, which is absorbed in us. This is the celestial and Iris-light of supreme promise to those that can evolve spiritually. But after what manner can the Spirit of Christ be said to have birth in us? We have spoken of a quickening in the soul, as of a new and higher light, but we know that the spirit is eternal, monadic, not separable. Therefore, the quickening in question is of the consciousness only, which rises into knowledge of the overshadowing Pneuma. The spirit does not really descend into us, but we are elevated into the spirit. If we require after what manner, we can obtain some light from the analogical processes of Alchemy. *There is a progressive unfoldment from the white to the red state of the Philosophical Stone. The white state is spiritually interpreted as that of soul-consciousness, and we have expended our reasonable enthusiasm on the joy of this condition. The stone, however is man, in this connection, and the stone at the red is man conscious in the spirit. The evolution from the white to the red is performed alchemically by the elevation of fire and*

the quickening of the consciousness into the divine knowledge of the Pneuma is performed by the exaltation of that interior heat of which we everywhere read in the Mystics. It is the eternal fire and energy, of which the material energy and fire are the exterior translation and the representative type. It is that love of God which is not only the instrument of communication, but the thing communicating and the thing communicated—that love which is the centre and the source of souls the font of spirits, the universal and infinite principle of all interior life. So has the fountain of all mystic achievement been defined by the great transcendentalists to be simply the force of love elevated to a divine degree and endowed with an infinite power.

“The revelation of the spirit is like a dawn breaking in the sky. Hast thou seen it breaking slowly over wide marshes, or a waste and shoreless sea? There is an illuminated patience exacted of the lone wanderer who is waiting for the “heaven-sent moment,” and for “the spark from heaven,” who is waiting for the day’s brightness and the joy that cometh in the morning:

See the earliest Rose of Morning
Fills the eternal East with light!

It is indeed the Rose of Hermes, the Mercurius, the Messenger; it is indeed the "Holy Rose," the "awful Rose of Dawn," which kindles and is unfolded of God, as it were, out of the very soul of heaven, even as in the limpid depths of the heaven in the soul of man; yet seems it not unto those who, like the blue mountains, "watch and wait always," to be almost a thousand years since the light began to break? Coldly on the grey waters, faint on the far away mists of the ever withdrawn horizon, pale and dainty coral on the low, still clouds, it comes, it is here—a universal flash simultaneously diffused and all-possessing; we have entered suddenly into glory. There is a blaze of beauty, and the blue above is reflected in blue beneath. Thanks be to God—Light-Bearer, Light-Bringer, Prometheus! We may spread our sails in the morning; the darkness is over and done; the splendid space of the spell-weaving moonlight is also swallowed up in glory. We are conscious no longer in the soul, for Psyche has become conscious in Pneuma.”*

*"Azoth, or, the Star in the East," A. E. Waite.

29. If the few immediately preceding pages of *extracts* from the writings of the Alchemists are not sufficient of themselves to satisfy any one as to the general character of the object of the art, and that it was religious, I know not what evidence would suffice for the purpose. There is but one subject in the whole range of human interests that can furnish an interpretation to those citations, and it is that which is known under the name of the *new birth* in religion. The experience itself may have many forms, the genuine element or substance of it breaking through a crust of human mixtures of innumerable components, as passions, errors, mistakes, ignorance, and sin, not forgetting also that it appears at various periods of life, sometimes as early as at six or eight years of age, and then again not unfrequently even at sixty and upwards.

30. It is stated, however, as a part of the history of the Art, that one adept found the stone at twenty-three years of age, and this was thought a very early period in life for such a discovery; by which we may suppose that much of what is called a religious experience, or conversion, would not be considered a

falling within the strict boundaries of the arts, or would not be regarded as a sure indication of being an adept.

31. A genuine religious experience is *very* rare. Much of what commonly passes under this name indicates more of mere emotion than of true insight, and partakes more of human variability than the arts allow. The artist tell us to make the stone once, and never make it again; meaning that, once truly made and there is no after change. We may even suppose them to mean that there is no falling from (a true) grace, and of course in that case there can be no repetition of it.

32. Some religious writers do not hesitate to say, that, if anyone gives signs of having fallen from grace, it is a sure evidence that he never truly possessed it. I am not qualified to discuss this question, and yet I think its solution may have some bearing upon Alchemy. It may refer to what I call *the end* of the art, of which I am religiously indisposed to speak, for many reasons, chiefly because no consideration in the world would induce me to hazard a mistake in regard to it; for whatever others may think of it, I

suppose it to relate to the *one thing needful*; and as I would not willingly err on this point myself, so neither would I mislead any one in regard to it. I prefer to encounter the charge of presumption in recommending this abstinence for the imitation of others. He who undertakes the office of a teacher should at least be very sure of his own footing in matters of religion, and I am sure that this is the subject of Alchemy.

33. The genuine Alchemists were of the opinion that true religion cannot be taught, in the ordinary meaning of the word. It may be preached about, talked about, and written about; but there always remains something in the depths of a religious soul which cannot be expressed in human language. Hence the line,

“Expressive silence muse his praise,”
is the best utterance of a true religious feeling.

34. The subject of religion may be talked about, written about, and preached about; but the final step, the entrance into “light,” is not taken by any force of mere human will; nor is it the reward of a mere search after knowledge, unless this search be after truth, under an impulse which is not the fruit of any merely

human will, but must itself partake of a religious character, its true nature only becoming known after it has consummated its own proper results. This is probably one of the chief reasons for symbolic writing."

"Before we speak of the truly divine condition," says A. E. Waite, "this pearl and hyaline of the mind, this grand illumination beyond which, when all its possibilities have been explored, there is no possible illumination through the limitations of mortal life, let us abide a little longer in the lower rapture of the state of union. It is then that condition in which we know God intuitively through the moonlight medium of our soul. There are degrees and graduations therein; the faculty itself is the birthright of many persons who never extend its field, who never test its powers; it is especially the gift of that softer phase of our humanity, which, in itself, embraces both phases; it is *par excellence* the faculty of the woman. Beyond the sphere of its beautitude few Christian transcendentalists have ever passed, and it is for this reason that Mysticism in the West seems to be the feminine side of theology. It is rich in loving sentiment and

enshrined monumentally in the imperishable beauty of its luminous literature. For all spiritual Mystics who have risen towards God in Christendom, and have left us any records of their experience in the poetic romance of Christ, have spoken at length of this period. They tell us that the end for which God has created man is that he may become glorified in Him and by Him, and that by the application of a divine energy, He, even in this life as truly as in the other, doth overflow the soul with happiness by a psychal comprehension in Himself. He has placed no limit to the capacity of our nature for happiness, and He ministers infinitely to our faculty, which is the only adequate ministry, for it alone quenches all thirst, satisfies all hunger, and extinguishes all desire in fruition, or renews it eternally, in satisfaction. Here in this life we are told that it is performed by grace, there the operation is in glory; here it is a work of infusion, or of such an activity in this our environed mode which takes an aspect of infusion as its result, there it is a work of immersion. And the reason is in this, that here we can escape, if we will, into the refuge of matter and the senses; there, to our joy or

our sorrow, we cannot escape our God. There is an infinite possibility of sorrow possessed by the soul of man, for we see that from the standpoint of the Mystics it has an infinite capacity for joy. But it is the sorrow of the Morning Star, of lapsed, but light-bearing Lucifer; it is not the black and barren sorrow in the perdition of orthodox theology, and amid the pangs of material fire invented by an implacable asceticism. In the depths of that sorrow are the cooling waters of the well of God's mercy. Perish Christianity itself before we believe in hell! Perish the hope of the Mystics! Frustrate be the desire of the saints! We shall find disillusion in the midst of the joy in God ere hope shall end for the sinner. In the wisdom of the transcendental, calmly and assured do we rest that God has never made a heart ache except with love for Himself.

“Now, there is only one bond of our union with God, and that is in His love and His service. The divine and secret Master of the Soul, who is the sphere of the soul's intuition, instructs us in the mysteries of His magnificence, mercy, and bounty, and when we have arrived, says the *Illumine*, Louis de Bois, at this

exalted state of union, the soul perceives itself to be enlightened by the rays of eternal truth—in other words, it has entered into the first consciousness of the absolute. It perceives truth through its own medium—a little while, a little further, a step higher in the grand ascent, and we may perceive after another manner, and this will be that higher consciousness of the absolute, of which we have already spoken by the magnanimous privilege of God; wherein the seeing eye of the spirit is gifted with direct vision, and the mind becomes “a pure instrument of positive knowledge.”

35. The Alchemists were earnestly employed about the *New Birth*; and though they called it the gift of God, they inquired into it as a work of nature within nature; for with them it was a maxim that nature dissolves nature, nature joins nature, nature loves nature, nature amends nature, nature perfects and is perfected by nature. Therefore I have said that Alchemy (Mysticism) was religious philosophy, or was so intended by the Alchemists.

36. In religion, as popularly understood, conversion is said to commence with repentance, without which,

we are told, it is impossible to reach a realizing sense of acceptance with God.

37. In Alchemy this repentance, or something like it, was called a "philosophical contrition;" which did not necessarily presuppose deliberate sin, but only such errors and mistakes as an unenlightened and unguided will, may fall into in its first communion with the world. In this early stage the will regards chiefly the *individual self*, and its acts and doings tend to bring this self into conflict with the *not-self*, which is indeed the other and really more noble part of the self; and the end is to turn the will to the *not-self* and adjust it to the whole, its *entire self*.

Leibnitz says: "The human soul is infinitely richer than it is itself aware of: its being is so broad and deep that it can never wholly develop and comprehend itself in the consciousness. Man is a mystery to *himself*, a riddle which will never be solved in the consciousness; for, should he ever attain to the internal intuition of his whole being, he would be swallowed up and consumed in himself."

"Even Christ, when he came, taught in parables; He established symbolical ceremonies; His life and death

are a great symbol which eternally pre-exist in the starry heavens. The most divine of all missions to man was fitly the most parabolic of all. The doctrines which have been developed in the churches that bear His name, if rightly understood, are also symbols—they are economies of divine things, and the Mystics, in common with the Grand Symbolist, in common with the spirit of nature, in common with the greatest of their masters, have invariably taught by the eternal method of typology, have ever quickened and fertilized the minds of their disciples by the suggestions of parable and allegory, have ever promoted by these means the culture of the imagination, the education of the faculty of wonder. They have elaborated a tissue of many-sided symbolism—part obscure, part diaphanous—which is like the auroles of dim gold round the heads of the canonized hierophants.

“All Mystic or Alchemic symbolism, like that of Nature, has reference to the two interiors, the world which is within man, and that which is without, and veiled by, the visible universe. The Mystics know that there is a ‘depth below the depth, and a height above the height,’ that ‘our hearing is not hearing, and our

seeing is not sight.' He knows also, could we scale those altitudes, could we sound those unmeasured profundities, could we once get behind the veil which is woven everywhere around us in the gorgeous panoply of the phenomenal universe, that there is an actuality we should arrive at, and that the 'vision' is He, the King in His beauty, the absolute of the Mystics' imperative aspiration when he has ascended to the summits of his being, and high above all the splendors of the visible world, above all secondary causes, sends forth the clarion challenge of the soul into the timeless immensity, and cries—no longer as 'an infant in the night,' but with the whole strength of his nature—for the desired light, as the spirit in the dread and the stillness pauses before the closed eye of the unknown darkness. 'Thou art emblazoned,' says the *crown of flowers*, 'on the everlasting banners, O thou eye of Sol! Thine eyelid is the night of Chaos, and thy glance is the universal harmony of evolved universes. Thy pupil is the stone of the philosophers, even that stone which is beheld by the just man, *et sicut palma florebit.*' '*

*"Azoth, or, the Star in the East."

38. The first step of man towards the discovery of his *whole being*, the Alchemists called a philosophical contrition as has already been explained. They also called it figuratively the black state of the matter. This was said to be the first color, giving a sure sign of a true or right operation, without which the work could by no possibility succeed. In this black state was carried on the work of "dissolution," "calcination," etc., the separation being of that which the writers call the superfluous phlegm and faeces from the matter, which was then supposed to pass into the white state,—that of purification. In this white state the red was said to be contained, as the white was said to be contained in the black, the whole work being regarded as one continuous operation. The red state being wrought out advanced the matter to the perfect state, that of *fixation*, as it was called; by which the soul was supposed to have entered into its true rest in God, where alone it can rest. (This is the seventh day.)

39. The so-called state of fixation was not understood as one of unyielding reliance upon one's self, but as a condition in which the man was supposed *fixed*

in an intelligent obedience to God,—fixed, because enabled to exclaim, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” But God is for those who love and obey his eternal will.

40. There appears to be something in the examination of this subject which opens up, at first, a seeming contradiction between the intellect and the senses, or between science and opinion, though in the end everything becomes reconciled in unity. We may perceive some shadow of it, in the evidence of the uninstructed senses that the heavenly bodies revolve around the earth, science ultimately showing that this movement of the heavenly bodies is only a parent,—a result of the revolution of the earth on its axis.

41. The most extraordinary results in mathematics have been obtained by a notion which the senses can in no wise conceive or comprehend, as in the differential calculus; and no one can assign a limit to discoveries of this nature, in which the intellect, or a certain intuitive conception (not perception) overmasters the senses and carries them into willing captivity.

42. No one can define and distinguish eternity from time, so as to avoid the notion that eternity is a very long time. We call it infinite, and fancy that by this

word we have removed the difficulty, but it is universally conceived as a double infinite, an infinite past and an infinite future; when, in fact, these expressions are wholly improper, both the past and the future being to the imagination indefinite, but not infinite; while the present is said by some to be the true infinite, or the true eternal; for we *are* never *in* the past and never *in* the future, but always in the present, which may be called the *substance* of *time*, time itself, the past and future, being two “superficial components” of the eternal. If we call the present *Sol*, and the past and future *Sulphur* and *Mercury*, and study the *nature of things*, free from the bias of early education and habit, and free also from the delusion that words can teach things, when it is things only that can define words, we may discover how the present is the essential, while the past and future are superficial, and yet all three are one; for while in the present, we are in the future *with respect to the past*, and the past *with respect to the future*.

43. Hobbes could not *perceive* this, and, as he could not or did not *conceive* it, he ridiculed the notion of the eternal *Now*,—as he denied everything that refused to come under the dominion of the senses. But

the history of science everywhere illustrates the proper supremacy of the intellect over the senses, and when attained in due course of nature itself, the senses become perfectly obedient, as we see emphatically in the history of astronomy.

44. It is in vain that opinion enters into conflict with science, or the senses with intellect; for the intellect cannot be convinced through or by the senses; neither indeed can the senses be convinced, except through the intellect; and as most men live in the senses and not in the intellect, so most of the conscientious disputations in the world are confined to those who live wholly or chiefly in the senses; that is, upon opinions and not knowledge, in which both parties may be in error, while neither the one nor the other is able to distinguish where the error lies. But in true knowledge there is no ground for discussion and conflict, the existence of which is proof indeed that one or both of the parties has no proper conception of the point in debate.

From this comes the saying, that clever men soon discover each other and recognize each other by signs infinitely more sure and unfailling than by any artificial or conventional signs in masonry or any other secret association.

CHAPTER III.

“Assuming once more that Alchemical literature deals primarily at least with the conscious intelligence of man, and with the unevolved possibilities of the body and mind of humanity, there is another mark which, through all veils and appearances, ought to be distinguished therein, and that is the importance of man in the art. It is to be remembered that symbolism, though it is meant to act as a veil, is also designed to be understood, if we are to regard its creation as occurring under the law of right reason. It is intended to raise a difficulty, but not an insuperable barrier. The Alchemists must have had some object in writing and circulating their innumerable books, and we may take it that they served as decoys which attracted the wonder of a concourse of curious enquirers, and out of the *turba vulgorum* the elect were picked and preserved by a kind of intellectual selection. Alchemical symbolism was thus designed to be *caviare* to the crowd, but not impenetrable to the prepared. And it is satisfactory for our purpose to note

that the sequence of typology was so adapted to the purpose of these profound researchers, that the key to the process—or, rather, to the nature of the mystery of the process—was held out without any evasion or subterfuge, and in many cases was almost as much paraded as the sacredness of the art, while, at the same time, it was of such a kind that it was likely to be discovered only by those who deserved to possess it. It was adapted to the quality of the mind that the Mystics desired to attract it; it would be passed over by those who were devoid of that quality. The ‘bellows-blowing Alchemists,’ or souffleur, whose ambitions were limited to the merely physical experiment, was the least likely among all possible disciples of Hermes to attain the grand secret. The slave of the literal meaning, he who had no eyes to see, no mind to interpret, beyond it; in many cases, with a truly pitiable earnestness, he may have devoted his life to the quest, but, through a natural incapacity, he became the victim of the veil and symbol, and not without cause might accuse the Hermetic method which misled him. But ever does science demand and obtain her victims, and law of itself has no mercy to an inadequate faculty or an incomplete instrument.

“We may conclude, then, that alchemical symbolism was not of the nature of a cryptogram which might surrender to the sharpness of a good guesser. The few persons who in these days have accepted its literature in any serious manner have been apt to regard it as a puzzle, which was to be arranged and rearranged till the right answer was reached. But it is clear that the adepts of a true, and above all of a divine science would not inclose their mysteries in cryptograms, which exercise only the ingenuity of the seeker, and give no guarantee whatever of his moral or spiritual qualification. Now, the key which we refer to is precisely that which, on our assumption, we ought to have found in the alchemical literature, and it is actually the importance of *man in the art*. ‘He,’ says St. Chrysostom, ‘is the most resplendent and glorious image, and the most exquisite portal and epitome of the unseen world.’ This is the key-note of Spiritual Mysticism, and it is the key-note of practical Alchemy. ‘If that which thou seekest thou findest not *within* thee, thou wilt *never* find it without thee,’ says Alipi.”*

*“Azoth, or, the Star in the East.”

45. Alchemy—one of the names or one of the forms of Hermetic Philosophy in the Middle Ages—was religious philosophy, or philosophic religion; for here as elsewhere the sulphur and mercury (the sun and moon) pass into one.

46. It was an effort, in what has been called a benighted period, to realize religion in man apart from its forms and ceremonies, as properly innate in man, whose nature was supposed to contain it. In the language of Hollandus, "It (meaning man) contains all that we seek; and it needs only that, first, we separate what is superfluous from it, and then, that we turn its inside outwards: then it will be good gold."

47. But as this may seem to present an inviting facility, as if it was an easy matter for man to be saved,—which the philosophers indeed tell us is really the case, but they add, that it is only so to the wise man, for to the wise man only is the yoke of Christ easy,—we will add a few passages from a work entitled, "*De Manna Benedicto*" which may serve to show how earnest these writers were in their warnings against indulging in self-security and ungrounded hopes. The reader may remember the cautions of Espagnet and others on this subject already cited.

“Whosoever thou art that readest this tract, let me advise thee rather to fix thy mind and soul on God, in keeping His commandments, than upon the love of this art (the love, the author means, of the supposed external advantages of the art), for although it be the only, nay, all the wisdom of the world, yet doth it come short of the divine wisdom of the soul, which is the love of God in keeping His commandments..... Hast thou been covetous, profane? be meek and holy, and serve in all humility thy most glorious Creator. *If thou dost not resolve to do this, thou dost but wash an Ethiopian white, and shalt waste an earthly estate, hoping to attain this science.*

“There is no human art or wit which can snatch it from the Almighty’s hand; nor was it ever, and I am persuaded it never shall be, given but to such as shall be upright of heart.”

As a further caution against precipitate haste in forming conclusions as to this philosophy, we add the following passage from the commentary of Eyrenaeus upon Ripley:

“We have plainly and faithfully done our duty, and by a line, as it were, have separated the false from the true; yet we know, that in the world our writings

will prove to be a curious edged knife; to some they shall carve out dainties, but to others they shall serve only to cut their fingers; yet we are not to be blamed; for *we do seriously admonish all who shall attempt this work, that they undertake the highest piece of philosophy in nature*; and though we write in English, yet our matter will be as hard as *Greek* to some, who will think nevertheless that they understand us well, when they misconstrue our meaning most perversely; for it is imaginable that they who are *fools in nature*, should be wise in our books, which are *testimonies unto nature*. For all this work of the artist is only to help nature; we can do no more; yea, we have professed and will continue to profess that we do but administer unto nature herein. For all the works of God are entire; we can but behold them and admire them (and work with them and by them) and therefore we seek our *principles* where nature is, and amend nature in its own nature. Whereas those who work upon other matters do most shamefully betray their ignorance. They do not consider the possibility of nature, but work after their fancy."

48. This writer, Eyrenaeus, compares a seeker to

one who enters a castle, anxious to view its curiosities, which, however, cannot be seen but by means of a *guide*, who accordingly offers his services. This guide has a peculiar character, and the seeker is thus advised in regard to him :

“You must know how to please him, that he may be the more willing to go along with you in the right way, and not leave you, as he hath done some, nor mislead you, as he hath done others, who, when they have attempted this work with fair success in the knowledge of matters requisite, have notwithstanding fatally erred,—not knowing how to please their guide, who hath a humor of his own not to be equalled in the world; *and if you make him either sullen or choleric, you may as well give over the enterprise.*

“First of all, then, know that for his part he is a very stupid fool; there is none more simple among all his brethren; yet he is most faithful to his Lord, and doth all things for him most prudently, ordering all things in the family very discreetly; which I may rather ascribe to a natural instinct, than to any quickness of parts. He is very faithful; for which cause he will never either ask or answer any question, but goes on his way silently; nor will he ever go before you,

but follow. You must be very wary how you lead him, for if he can find an opportunity he will give you the slip, and leave you to a world of misfortune.

“By his countenance you shall know whether he be pleased or displeased; therefore lay bonds on him; that is, shut him close where he may not get forth; then go before with *heat*,* and be ever watchful of his countenance as he follows; his anger you shall know by *redness in his countenance*; and his sullenness by his lumpish behavior; when in good humor he is indifferent, active and merry; and so you shall pass on forward, or turn, or go back, as you see his countenance and temper inclined.”

49. Need the reader be told who this personage is, and that every man hath him at command unless he offends him and drives him away, or by neglect reduces him to silence? He is the soothing “plaster” to be applied to the heart at night, and to be carefully preserved during the day. He was the guide of Socrates, known in history as the *Daemon of Socrates*; and the difference between Socrates and other men lies

*Heat here signifies nature, which is always in harmony with the genuine workings of conscience, the two becoming in the end one.

principally in the simple fact, that the teacher of Plato never disobeyed his guide.

50. Socrates, in his Defense before the Athenians is made by Plato to speak of himself as being "*moved by a certain divine and spiritual influence,*" which he says began with him "*from childhood, being a kind of voice which even in the most trifling affairs*" opposed him, "*when about to do anything wrong,*" but never urged him on when in the right; that is, like the guide spoken of by Eyrenaeus, never went before him, but kept him company, and put on a certain "*redness of countenance*" whenever danger was near.

51. Whole volumes and numberless essays have been written to explain the simple allusions in Plato and Xenophon to the Daemon of Socrates; but nothing more is necessary for this purpose than a reference to "*the actuality of nature,*" with a reasonable supposition that the conscience is more clear and distinct in its monitions in some men than in others, being perhaps overlaid and obstructed in its action.

This Daemon of Socrates is the "*still small voice*" of all the Initiates and is in itself but the awakened conscience of man. "Before man can perfectly ex-

emplify this principle *within* himself, he must have first developed what has been called the cosmic consciousness. In other words, he must have awakened to an *inner* appreciation of the whole, a sympathy and breadth of charity which can exclude nothing. His love should enfold the lowest and the vilest as well as the highest and purest; no one should be too insignificant or too important to be rejected of his heart or his service. He must understand the place of everything in the divine economy, and that in it nothing can be either small or great. He must become in perfect accord with his mother, Nature, and his father, Spirit, and recognize the purpose of change and the good which is the *goal* of the divine restlessness of God. He must grow infinitely responsive to all the sorrows of his fellowmen, as well as to their joys, at the same time understanding the purport of their sorrows and joys and realizing their transientness.

“This is the state of consciousness attained by the Alchemists, those superb souls, masters of wisdom and compassion, in whom the divine light shines in all its effulgence. They are the beacon fires for the rest of humanity, driving the darkness of ignorance and

doubt back to its original abyss of nothingness, and giving the world a radiance which brightens the path of their younger brothers. They are co-workers with the divine in Nature, and as the divine essence manifests by ever giving of itself, so they find their supremest joy in renunciation and service.

E. Levi tells us that: "Herein lieth the Great Arcanum of Magic—not to give way before the unchangeable forces of nature, but to *direct* them; not to be enslaved by them, but make use of them to the profit of immortal liberty. Nature is intelligent but not free; the celestial bodies possess instinctive souls like animals and fertilize one another; the planets are the seraglio of the sun, and the suns are the obedient sheep of God. The earth has a soul which obeys the sun, subject to the decrees of fate, and man, in like manner, instinctively. But great knowledge and wisdom, or, alternatively, great exaltation, are necessary to any man who would command the soul of the earth. Folly has its prodigies like wisdom, and indeed in greater abundance, because wisdom seeks not prodigies, but tends rather, and naturally, to check their occurrence. It is said that the devil has his miracles, and, in the

sense which the uninstructed masses attribute to the term, he is indeed almost the only worker of workers. Everything that tends to estrange man from science and from reason is most certainly the work of an evil principle.

“According to hieratic tradition, man, the only son of God, ought to command the earth, but, having infringed the Law of God, he has himself ceased to be free, and slaves are equal in their servitude. The soul of the earth is hostile to man, because she is conscious, so to speak, that he has no longer the right to rule her; she therefore resists and deceives him, producing dreams, nightmares, visions, and hallucinations, favored herein by fanaticism, drunkenness, debauchery, and all nervous disorders.”

52. As this work is purposely made up of extracts from the writings of the Alchemists,—to let them speak for themselves,—and has nothing of our own in it but suggestions with a view to the interpretation of those writings,—we will cite other examples of a reference to the conscience as *the guide* to what we call for convenience, *the End*. We take from *Lumen de Lumine*, or a *New Magical Light*. (1651.)

“There is a *mountain* (Mons Magorum Invisibilis),

situated in the midst of the earth (or centre of the world,—this centre is said to be everywhere,—which is both small and great.) It is soft; also above measure hard and stony. It is far off, and yet near at hand; but by the providence of God invisible. In it are hidden most ample treasures, which the world is not able to value.

“This mountain, by the envy of the devil, is compassed about with very cruel beasts and ravenous birds, which make the way difficult and dangerous; and, therefore, hitherto, because the time is not yet come, the way thither could not be sought after by all, but only by the worthy man’s self-labor and endeavors. (Phil. ii:12.)

“To this mountain you shall go on a certain night, when it comes, most long and most dark (the night of trial, doubt, trouble,—the dark wood of Dante); and see that you prepare yourself by prayer. Insist upon (pursue only) the way that leads to the mountain, but ask not of any (mere) man where the way lies; follow only your *guide*, who will offer himself to you, and will meet you in the way, but you shall not know him. (Very few, certainly, recognize the conscience as the

Oracle of God, the Immanuel and guide to His presence.) This guide will bring you to the mountain at midnight, when all things are silent and dark (at the point of greatest depression in a worldly sense). It is necessary that you arm yourself with a resolute, heroic courage, lest you fear those things that will happen (trials of the life) and so fall back. You need no sword (except that of the spirit), nor any bodily weapons; only call upon God sincerely and heartily. (Invoke the aid of the Greatest and Best.) Be resolute, and take heed that you return not, for your guide, who brought you hither, will not suffer any evil to befall you. ('No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God,' Luke ix :62.)

“When you have discovered the mountain, the first miracle that will appear is this—a most vehement and very great wind will shake the whole mountain (man) and shatter the rocks (passions) to pieces. You will be encountered by lions, dragons and other terrible wild beasts (untamed or untransmuted passions); but fear not any of these things. Be resolute and take heed that you return not, for your guide will not

suffer any evil to befall you. As to the treasure, it is not yet discovered, but it is very near. After this wind will come an earthquake, which will overthrow those things which the wind had left. Be sure you fall not off. The earthquake being past, there will follow a fire that will consume the earthly rubbish and discover the treasure, but as yet you cannot see it. After all these things, and near daybreak, there shall be a great calm, (the calm is that of the soul surrendering itself to God,) and you shall see the day star (peace, light) arise, and the darkness will disappear.”

“You will *conceive* a great treasure; the chiefest thing and the most perfect is a certain exalted *tincture*, (spirit,) with which the world (man), if it serves God, and were worthy of such gifts, might be tinged, and turned into most pure gold. That is, the soul realizes the perfect goodness of God, or becomes capable of it. The tincture we are directed to use as the ‘guide shall teach,’ and it shall make the old young, etc., and pearls (truths) shall be discovered ‘of such excellency as cannot be imagined.’

“But do not arrogate anything to yourself because of your present power (1 Cor. iv:6), but be contented with that which your *guide* (a pure conscience) shall

communicate to you. Praise God perpetually for this His gift, and have a special care that you use it not for worldly pride, but employ it in such works as are contrary to the world. Use it rightly, and enjoy it so as if you had it not. (To use anything *rightly* is simply to use it conscientiously; and no gift of God is a personal possession, but a trust, which is substantially lost the moment it is prized as an exclusive right. This is according to St. Paul. (1 Cor. iv:7.) Live a temperate life, and beware of all sin, otherwise your guide will forsake you, and you shall be deprived of this happiness. For know this of a truth, whosoever abuseth this tincture, and lives not exemplary, purely, and devoutly before men, he shall lose his *benefit*, and scarce any hope will there be left ever to recover it afterwards.”.

53. There is no particular mystery in this concluding remark, since a conscience “void of offence” can be maintained only by avoiding offence. Many will think the simplicity of these directions is not worthy of much mystery and secrecy as these writers throw over it; but the attempt to put into practice what they teach may turn out to be the most difficult thing in the

world. Beautiful things are as difficult as rare, says Plato. *Let him who standeth take heed lest he fall*, says a greater authority.

54. The guide is not the spectacle, but the way to it. The spectacle itself is said to be something altogether *unique* with which nothing can be compared, and though at last "involuntary, it comes unsought to none;" hence philosophy echoes the teachings in Matthew vii:7, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." But you *must* seek, in order to find.

The practice may not be so hard and the instructions are simple, but it is not in these things that the work comes hard, it is *in the preparation*. When the man, through a long course of training, has become the artist, painting is no longer a hard work, it is *very* simple to *him*, but the preparation was extremely difficult. Let us look at the instructions of the masters in regard to what is necessary for the preparation, only after which the training begins. Pernety tells us that:

"Worship God alone; love Him with all your heart, and your neighbors as yourself. Have always the

glory of God as the aim of all your actions; call upon Him; He will hear you; glorify Him, He will exalt you.

“Be slow in speech and action. Do not rely upon your own prudence, upon your knowledge, or upon the word and riches of men, especially of the great. Put your trust in God alone. Cultivate the talents which He has entrusted to you. Be avaricious of time; it is infinitely short for a man who knows how to use it. Do not put off until to-morrow, which is not yours, that which you should do to-day. Associate with the good and the wise. Man was born to learn; his natural curiosity is a palpable proof of this; and to stagnate in idleness and ignorance, is to degrade humanity. The more a man knows the more closely he approaches the Author of Being, who knows all. Therefore profit by the knowledge of the wise; receive their instructions with gentleness, and their corrections always in good part. Flee from the association of the wicked, the multiplicity of affairs, and the multiplicity of friends.

“Sciences are acquired only by study, by *meditation*, and not by dispute. Learn a little at a time;

repeat often the same study; the mind can do all when concentrated upon *one sole object*, but nothing when trying to embrace too many.

“Knowledge, joined to experience, forms the truest wisdom. Lacking this, one must have recourse to opinion, to doubt, to conjecture and to authority.

“The subjects of science are God, the Universe, or Macrocosm, and Man. Man has been made for God, woman for God and man, and the other creatures for man and woman, so that they should make use of them for their occupations, their own preservation, and the glory of their common Author. Above all act so as to be always in harmony with God and your neighbor. Vengeance is a weakness in man. Never make an enemy; and if one does evil to you, it would be better and more noble, to avenge yourself by doing good to him.

Again: “There are two kinds of sciences, not more. Religion and Physics; that is to say, the science of God and the science of Nature; all others are only branches of these. There are even spurious ones; they are errors rather than sciences.

“God gives the first in its perfection to saints and the children of heaven; enlightens the mind of man so

that it may acquire the second, and the demon throws into it clouds to suggest the spurious ones.

“Religion comes from Heaven, it is the true science, because God the *source* of truth, is its Author. Physics is the knowledge of Nature; with it *man* can do wonderful things.

“The power of man is greater than one would imagine. He can do all with the help of God, nothing without it, except evil.”

As to the key of science, Pernety tells us that the *first* step to wisdom is the fear of God, the second the knowledge of Nature. By it we ascend even to the knowledge of her Author. Nature teaches to the discerning the Hermetic Philosophy. The long work is always Nature's; she works simply, by degrees, and always by the same means to produce the same results. The work of art is shorter; it outstrips Nature. The work of God is done in an instant. Alchemy, properly speaking, is an operation of Nature, *aided* by art. It places in our hands the Key of Natural Magic, or Physics, and renders us wonderful to men, by elevating us above the masses.

“The requirements necessary in order to arrive at

the secret, are: the knowledge of Nature and of *one's* self. One may not understand the first perfectly, or even the second, without the aid of Alchemy. The love for wisdom, the horror of crime, and of falsehood, the avoidance of cacochemists, the association of the wise, the invocation of the holy spirits; not to add secret to secret, to attach one's self only to one thing, (because God and Nature delight in unity and simplicity,) such are the conditions necessary for obtaining the divine revelation.

“Man being the epitome of all Nature, must learn to know himself as the summary, the miniature of Nature. By his spiritual part he is allied to all immortal creatures, and by his material part, to all that which is transient in the universe.”

Appollonius, in reproof to some of those who claimed to be his followers, wrote:

“If any say he is my disciple, then let him add he keeps himself apart out of the baths, he slays no living thing, eats of no flesh, is free from envy, malice, hatred, calumny, and hostile feelings, but has his name inscribed among the race of those who've won their freedom.” It is not, then, such an easy matter

to prepare for the work. There is no doubt but that once the Neophyte is prepared and passes through the necessary training the work is easy, but until then it is a path of thorns. The spirit may be willing but the flesh is weak.

55. Man is the subject of Alchemy, and we will add another passage to this point, taken from Eyrenaeus:

“*Our stone* (man) is the representative of the great world, and hath the virtues of that great fabric, comprised or collected in this little system. In it there is a virtue magnetical, attractive of its like in the whole world. It is the celestial virtue, expounded universally in the whole creation, but epitomized in this small map or abridgment.

“This virtue or power is in itself barren, sluggish, and inactive, and for this reason it remaineth without fruit; but being loosed by art, it doth through the co-operation of Nature (often called *fire* or *heat*) produce that *arcanum* which hath not its like in the whole world..... The reward which this mastery will bring to the artist, (that is, to a true master of the art,) is indeed inestimable; for having it, he needs want no worldly blessing. For wealth he need take no care,

and from all frailties of body he hath a most sure antidote.

“Pray then to God, that He would be propitious unto your studies and labors, in giving thee the true knowledge of the secret *mystery*. It is *the gift of God*. I have helped thee what I can, but *venture not to practice barely upon my words*; for know that what I have only hinted, is far more than what I have explained; and what I have declared to thy first apprehension, most openly, hath yet its lurking serpent under the green grass; I mean, some hidden thing which thou oughtest to understand, but which thou, being sure at first blush, wilt neglect, and then it will bite thee by the heel when thou approachest to practice, and make thee begin again, and, it may be, at last throw away all, as one desperate; for know that *this art is very cabalistical*, and we do study expressions such as we know will suit with almost any man’s fancy, in one place or another; but be sure to take this maxim from one who knows best the sense of what he has written. ‘Where we speak most plainly, there be most circumspect; for we do not go about to betray the secrets of nature; especially then in those places which seem to give receipts as plain as you would desire, sus-

pect either a metaphor, or else be sure that something or other is suppressed, which thou wilt hardly without inspiration ever find of thyself, and which in trial will make all thy confident knowledge vanish; yet to a son of art, we have written that which never heretofore was by any so clearly revealed."

56. This passage was evidently designed as a friendly caution against an over confident and presumptuous spirit and Eyrenaeus concludes his book upon Ripley, after a minute though cabalistical account of the *operations*, in the following words:

"The cause of all these strange alterations in one glass, on one subject, with one decoction, without any laying on of hands, lies in the *internal disposition of the compound*, which at the first is gross and earthly (St. Paul's natural man, gentle reader); therefore in decoction it becomes very black, it being the nature of all moist gross things by the fire to acquire such a color. And this is according to the teachings of all philosophers; for, although thou seekest white and red, yet thou must at first make black, before thou canst make white profitably.

"O happy gate of blackness, (2 Cor. vii:10,) which

art the passage to this so great a change! Study, therefore, whoever appliest thyself to this art, only to know this secret; for know this and know all, and, contrariwise, be ignorant of this and be ignorant of all.

“But when once thy matter is become truly black, rejoice; for this death of the body will be the quickening of the spirit and then both soul and body will *unite* into a perfect whiteness, which is our *kingly diadem*.” The death of the body, to which reference is here and elsewhere made in these writings, is, of course, that to which St. Paul refers in Romans vi:6, where he calls it the death of the body of sin.

“We may search the literature of Alchemy, says A. E. Waite, and we may search the world itself, for the supposed first matter of the physical *Magnum Opus*, and, as we have seen, our trouble will be in vain. Modern chemistry continues to elaborate after its *own* fashion the innate potentialities of metals without having recourse to the Alchemists. The books of those old workers might still teach us something even in chemistry, could we find scientists to read them. But they will not teach us the grand metallic secret; and if

Seton and Lascaris, or any other initiated Celt, or any other Greek Archimandrite, have their veritable descendants to-day, there are apparently no Helvetius, no Delisle, and no Goldsmith's apprentices, to whom they will impart their arcanum. But the process *Psycho-Alchemical*, and the processes *Organo-Alchemical* whereby the *interior* possibilities which abide in the souls and bodies of men may be developed into active operation are not impracticable for want of a material to work upon. In metallic alchemy we know that it was not mercury and it was not sulphur of which the *Turba Philosophorum* availed themselves as the foundation of their procedures in *esoteric* decoction. In this other Alchemy, we know that the subject is man, that the end is his transmutation, that his body is the vase, and that his inner latencies are the energies to be educed. There is no foreign substance to apply. The work is exclusively one of purgation, education, and exaltation. We have to purge the impurities, to *unfold* the virtues, and to raise the elements. Thus, the work, in the main, that is to say, after the preliminary cleansings, is wholly one of *unfoldingment from within*. Even in its grand finale, the union of the individual with the universal spirit, it is

the individual which must seek the universal, the soul God, the steel filing the powerful magnet; it is the spark divine, the 'vital spark of heavenly flame,' which must return to the ocean of light. Grand is the destiny, and the way after all is facile, for it is not the maceration of flesh; it is not eternal war with environment; it is not renunciation—at least, in its hard and common significance—by which we shall gain our end, becoming 'a star amid the stars of mortal night.' It is by the perfectionizing and beautifying of the flesh; it is by adjustment with higher environment, and by civilizing what is savage in our surroundings; it is, in a word, by acquisition that our 'cycle' will 'move ascending;' and doubtless these things are easier than the old way of asceticism. They are the way of poesy and pleasantness, of joy and gladness, of divine delight in Nature and all her beauty, of felicity and humanity, leading up to communion with the Divine, and to permanent immersion in beatitude. And how, therefore, not easy, when it is possible to ascend into heaven on the wings of a woman's voice, singing in the spring of the year, and in the spring of being? And how, therefore, not possible when it is easy to enter Paradise through the

open gladness and light of loving eyes." Is this not plain enough for all students to understand?

56. There is a remarkable allusion to the tripleness of man in Plutarch's *Miscellanies*, (or *Morals*, as it is translated,) and two deaths are referred to as necessary for the liberation of man to bring him into a right state. The passage is so peculiar, that we copy it as a curiosity, observing that the "*Miscellanies*" are full of the opinions of ancient philosophers upon the nature of man. In the English translation, published in 1694, Plutarch sometimes is made to use the word *mind*, and sometimes *understanding*, for what is not often called *spirit*: in some places he used the word *discourse* as *word*, especially in *Isis and Osiris* apparently in the sense of John i:1. The passage to which we refer occurs in the tract entitled "*Of the Face appearing in the Orb of the Moon*;" to wit:

"The common opinion, and that which most persons hold, is, that man is a compound subject; and this they have reason to believe. But they are mistaken in thinking him to be compounded of two parts only; for they imagine that the understanding (reason, intellect, intuition, religion,) is a part of the soul, but the understanding as far exceeds the soul, as the soul

is better and more divine than the body. Now this composition of the Soul with the understanding makes reason; but with the body, passion; of which *this* is the beginning or principle of pleasure and pain, and *that* of virtue and vice. Of these three parts, conjoined and compacted together, the earth has given the body, the moon, the soul, and the sun the understanding to the generation of man. Now, of the deaths we die, the one makes two of three, and the other one of two. And the former indeed is in the region and jurisdiction of *Ceres*, (the earth, as the source of vegetation,) which is the reason of our sacrificing to her... As for the other death, it is in the moon, or region of *Proserpina*. And as with the one the terrestrial, so with the other the celestial *mercury* inhabits. *This* suddenly and with force and violence plucks the soul from the body; but *proserpina* mildly and in a long time disjoins the understanding from the soul. And for this reason is also called the *only begotten*, or rather, *begetting one alone*; for the better part of man becomes *alone*, when it is separated by her. Now both the one and the other happens according to Nature thus: (Here follows several pages of mystical explanations, and we encounter this passage:)

“The soul being moulded and formed by the understanding, and itself moulding and forming the body, by embracing it on every side, receives from it an impression and form, so that, although it be separated both from the understanding and the body, it nevertheless so retains still its figure and semblance for a long time that it may with good right be called its image.....The understanding is that which is sovereign over all the rest, *and cannot be made to suffer by any.*”

I do not think that the claim has ever been made that Plutarch was an initiate of the Eleusinian Mysteries, but he either was such an initiate or he thoroughly understood their teachings which will also help to explain the quotations made.

The Orphic Invocation to Ceres, in the Eleusinian Mysteries was:

TO CERES.

“O *universal* mother, Ceres famed,
August, the source of wealth, and various named:
Great nurse, all-bounteous, blessed and divine,
Who joy’st in peace; to nourish corn is thine.
Goddess of seed, of fruits abundant, fair,

Harvest and threshing are thy constant care.
Lovely, delightful queen, by all desired,
Who dwell'st in Eleusina's holy vale retired.
Nurse of all mortals, who benignant mind
First ploughing oxen to the yoke confined;
And gave to men what nature's wants require,
With plenteous means of bliss, which all desire.
In verdure flourishing, in glory bright,
Assessor of great Bacchus, bearing light:
Rejoicing in the reapers' sickles, kind,
Whose nature lucid, earthly, pure, we find.
Prolific, venerable, nurse, divine,
Thy daughter loving, holy Proserpine.
A car with dragons yoked 'tis thine to guide,
And, orgies singing, round thy throne to ride.
Only-begotten, much-producing queen,
All flowers are thine, and fruits of lovely green.
Swelling and pregnant, leading smiling Peace;
Come with fair Concord and imperial Health,
And join with these a needful store of wealth."

What goes still further to prove to us that Plutarch was an Initiate of the Eleusinian Mysteries is the fact that the explanation to the invocation of death is

exactly the same in the Orphic Hymns of the Invocations as that given by Plutarch, namely, the twofold death.

TO DEATH.

“Hear me, O Death, whose empire unconfined
Extends to mortal tribes of every kind.
On thee the portion of our time depends,
Whose absence lengthens life, whose presence ends.
Thy sleep perpetual bursts the vivid folds
*By which the soul attracting body holds:**
Common to all, of every sex and age,
For naught escapes thy all-destructive rage.
Not youth itself thy clemency can gain,
Vigorous and strong, by thee untimely slain.
In thee the end of nature’s works is known,
In thee all judgment is absolved alone.
No suppliant arts thy dreadful rage control,
No vows revoke the purpose of thy soul.
O blessed power, regard my ardent prayer,
And human life to age abundant spare.”

*What is said in *this* and the preceding lines is well explained by Porphyry in his excellent treatise entitled “*Auxiliaries to the Perception of Intelligibles*,” viz: “That which nature binds, nature also dissolves; and that which the soul binds, the soul likewise dis-

57. In Plutarch's "*Banquet of the Seven Wise Men*," the following passages occur:

"Since Thales has asserted the being of a soul in all the principal and most noble parts of the universe, it is no wonder that the most commendable acts are governed by an overrating power, for as the body is

solves. Nature, indeed, bound the body to the soul; but the soul binds herself to the body. Nature, therefore, liberates the body from the soul; but the soul liberates herself from the body." And again, in the next sentence, with *especial* reference to what Plutarch says:

"Hence there is a *twofold* death; the one, indeed, universally known, in which the body is liberated from the soul; but the other *peculiar to philosophers, in which the soul is liberated from the body*. Nor does the one entirely follow the other." The meaning of this twofold death is as follows: Though the body, by the death which is universally known, may be loosened from the soul, yet while material passions and affections reside in the soul, the soul will continually verge to another body, and as long as this inclination continues, remains connected with the body. But when, from the predominance of an intellectual nature, the soul is separated from material affections, it is truly liberated from the body; though the body at the same time verges and clings to the soul, as to the immediate cause of its support."

Here we have an awful mystery and it shows that not only was Plutarch an Initiate but also an Alchemist, for he understood this, the *highest* Alchemical process that can be known to any being.

the organ of the soul, so the soul is an instrument in the hands of God. (In the previous extract this is called the understanding.) Now as the body has many motions of its own, proceeding from itself, but the best and most from the soul, so the soul acts some things by its own power. But in most things it is subordinate to the will and power of God whose glorious instrument it is."

In the "*Discourse concerning the Daemon of Socrates*," Plutarch introduces a speaker as saying:

"Every soul hath some portion of reason (here reason is used for the understanding, that is, the spirit; in other words, the spirit of God); a man cannot be a man without it; but as much as she mixes with flesh and appetite is changed; and through pain or pleasure becomes irrational. Every soul doth not mix herself alike, for some plunge themselves into the body, and so in this life their whole frame is corrupted by appetite and passion; others are mixed as to some part, but the *purser part* (the understanding, or mind) still remains without the body; it is not drawn down into it, but it swims above, and touches the extremest part of the man's head. 'Tis like a cord to hold up,

as long as it proves obedient, and is not overcome by the appetites of the flesh. The part that is plunged into the body is called the soul, but the uncorrupted part is called the mind, and the vulgar think it is *within* them, just as they imagine the image reflected from a glass to be in the glass; but the more intelligent, who know it to be without, call it Daemon.”

Plutarch makes reference to death and it may not be amiss to look at, and understand death as the greatest of all Initiates and Philosophers understood it. I refer to Apollonius. He says:

“There is *no* death of anyone, but only in appearance, even as there is no birth of any, save only in seeming. The change from being to becoming seems to be birth, and the change from becoming to being seems to be death, but in reality no one is ever born, nor does one ever die. It is simply a being visible and then invisible; the former through the density of matter, and the latter because of the subtlety of being—being which is ever the same, its only change being motion and rest. For being has this necessary peculiarity, that its change is brought about by nothing external to itself; but whole becomes parts and parts become whole in the oneness of the all. And if it be

asked: What is this which sometimes is seen and sometimes not seen, now in the same, now in the different?—it might be answered: It is the way of everything here in the world below that when it is filled out with matter it is visible, owing to the resistance of its density, but is invisible, owing to its subtlety, when it is rid of matter, though matter still surrounds it and flows through it in that immensity of space which hems it in but knows no birth or death.

“But why has this false notion (of birth and death) remained so long without a refutation? Some think that what has happened through them, they have themselves brought about. They are ignorant that the individual is brought to birth *through* parents, not by parents, just as a thing produced *through* the earth is not produced *from* it. The change which comes to the individual is nothing that is caused by his visible surroundings, but rather a change in the one thing which is in every individual.

“And what other name can we give to it but primal being? ’Tis it alone that acts and suffers, becoming all, for all, through all, eternal Deity, deprived and wronged of its own self by names and forms. But this

is a less serious thing than that a man should be bewailed, when he has passed from man to God by change of state and not by the destruction of his nature. The fact is that so far from mourning death you ought to honor it and reverence it. The best and fittest way for you to honor death is now to leave the one who's gone to God, (this was written to Valerius, to enable him to bear the loss of his son,) and set to work to play the ruler over those left in your charge as you were wont to do. It would be a disgrace for such a man as you to owe your cure to time and not to reason, for time makes even common people cease to grieve. The greatest thing is a strong rule, and of the greatest rulers he is best who first can rule *himself*. And how is it permissible to wish to change what has been brought to pass by will of God? If there's a law in things, and there *is* one, and it is God who has appointed it, the righteous man will have no wish to try to change good things, for such a wish is selfish, and counter to the law, but he will think that all that comes to pass is a good thing. On! heal yourself, give justice to the wretched and console them; so shall you dry your tears. You should not set your private woes

above your public cares, but rather set your public cares before your private woes. And see as well what consolation you already have! The nation sorrows with you for your son. Make some return to those who weep with you; and this you will more quickly do if you cease from tears than if you still persist. Have you not friends? Why! you have yet another son. Have you not even still the one that's gone? You have!—will answer anyone who really thinks. For 'that which is' doth cease not—nay is just for the very fact that it will be for aye; or else the 'is not' is, and how could that be when the 'is' doth never cease to be?

"Again it will be said you fail in piety to God and are unjust. 'Tis true. You fail in piety to God, you fail in justice to your boy; nay more, you fail in piety to him as well. Would'st know what death is? Then make me dead and send me off to company with death, and if you will not change the dress you've put on it (that is his idea of death), you will have straightway made me better than yourself."

58. We need not be told that there were false Alchemists, we have admitted this before; both those that were simply mistaken and those who imprudently imposed upon the public. We contend that, notwith-

standing the bad reputation of this class of self-seekers, the genuine Alchemists were students of Nature, as they are to-day, perfectly honest in their purposes, aiming at the *summum bonum*; and it may be well for those who in this age refuse all credit to their pretensions not to deny at the same time that God has placed within the reach of every man a true good, however difficult its discovery may be, or rather, however slow and apparently unwilling men may be to believe that it can be found in a true life. No one denies, indeed, theoretically, the value of a true life. It is universally admitted to be indispensable to a happy life, but almost all men place something else as first in order, although, when examined, that something turns out to be only a means to an end, whereas in a true life both the means and the end unite and become one.

“The key, therefore, to a true life is nothing else but a true life itself; and this is the root of all philosophy which aims at the elevation of man, and, in fine, it is the root of truth itself, or rather it is root, body, and branches.

59. In vain, therefore, do men go out of themselves

for that which can only be found *within*; and as this is both the oldest and newest truth in the world, so is it the most simple and open, while yet it is the most hidden and secret thing in the world,—open and simple to those who accept it in its own spirit; but dark and obscure when sought for as something to be found abroad, and to be *explained* and *understood*, as the expression is, sensuously.

60. Yet as often as reference is made to what may seem the simplicity of the work, we feel obliged to repeat that this is but the *way*; the *end* being, as we understand the matter, a further development, and reward of those who “persevere *to the end* in well-doing.” (Rev. ii:26.)

“We admit that the processes of Mysticism (Alchemy) are those of a *spiritual* development;” says A. E. Waite: “we may also allow that the procedure of Alchemy is one of physical evolution in a given department of Nature, but both these admissions notwithstanding, it is no less grotesque in appearance to infer that the transfiguration of outward humanity will take place amidst a splendor of material light because a similar manifestation accompanied, or was supposed to accompany, artificial transfiguration in

the kingdom of metals and minerals. The Arcane doctrine of correspondence supposes a parallel method and kindred mode in all departments of Nature, but even here there is apparently only an inadequate justification. To become identified with the Hermetic standpoint, we must realize that department in the spiritual order is the *opening* of our nature into light after its own kind; it is the antitype of physical evolution in *the body* of *man*; while the system of metallic development is the shadow of both. The Mystics (Alchemists) do not look for the manifestation of a splendor of light in the perfect humanity to come because that achievement has been compassed in a department of *esoteric* mineralogy, but because it is a consequence of the operation of an Arcane law which has a varied field of operation, and is founded in the things of the spirit. Even in the metallic region it is not a merely chemical process, for it is the application of a principle to matter which is known only to the masters of soul. Spiritual hierophants alone have been *true* adepts in Alchemy.

“We have fashioned God in man’s likeness. Now we must re-create man after the image of our ideal God. And he comes before us in the archetypal or

mythological world as an emanation from God, the Prince of Heaven, 'the long-expected Parasu-Rama and Mahidi of Indian and Arabian' prophecy.

"The ideal man is the Lord of Fire, the Child of the Sun; he has a divine mission from above. He is Apollo, he is Hermes, the son of Maia; his heroic spirit mingles with the stars. He is the most eloquent of speakers; chains of gold flow from his mouth; he is a sweet-voiced musician. 'In a word, all religions have him, and confess his universality.' When he manifests, or *develops*, 'the universal globe shall enjoy the blessings of peace, secure under the mild sway of its new and divine sovereign.' He is 'a young man of high stature, taller than the rest.' "

When the Alchemists speak of a long life, as one of the gifts of the stone, they usually mean immortality, although there is an Elixir for the prolongation of life; when they attribute to the stone the virtue of a universal medicine, the cure of all diseases, they usually mean to deny a positive nature to evil, and thus deny its perpetuity; when they tell us that the stone is the "cut-throat of covetousness and of all evil desires," they mean that all evil affections disappear

in the light of truth, as darkness yields to the presence of light.

61. They cultivate simplicity of life as a positive good, and systematically avoided all excesses—all extremes. They even warn those who seek the stone to pursue their studies with an unanxious patience and moderation; at the same time, however, they tell the seeker that his search must on no account be intermitted. Here, as elsewhere, they guard against extremes, cautioning the student neither to let his “matter grow cold” nor “to burn his flowers with too much heat.”

62. Thus, to the maxim, *know thyself*, they added its younger brother, *nothing too much*; for as man occupies a middle position in Nature between the air and the earth, so the recognition and possession of a certain indescribable *mean* in his own nature may protect him from all vicious extremes, and secure the best ground of hope even here of a “sound mind in a sound body.”

63. By the transmutation of metals, the Alchemists meant the conversion of man from a lower to a higher order of development; that is, from what is commonly

called a natural, to a spiritual life, though these much used and little understood expressions cannot precisely make known their true meaning. By "fires" and "menstruums," and many such expressions, they intended to signify the powers of nature; which, though separated in "numbers," were regarded as working in one nature, and therefore in *unison*, the writers with one voice denying that there is any absolute disorder in the works of God, where all "discord is harmony not understood."

There is much misunderstanding as regards to the term "*conversion*," and it may be well to turn to A. E. Waite who gives us an explanation of these terms.

"Spiritually, it is of the highest importance that we should distinguish between the mystical doctrine of regeneration and the fascinating legends which are concerned with the soul's travellings, and the metamorphoses of Pneuma and Psyche, after much the same manner that it is necessary also to distinguish between the subjective rest in God, and that great body of traditional history and glamorous revelation which is concerned with the land of souls. The new birth has no traceable relation either to the age or youth of the spirit. Until we have fathomed the

mysteries of being, and have attained in God to an all-embracing knowledge of *ourselves*, it would be unbecoming in those who before all things, are governed by Divine reason, to say that there is no such connection. There is a harmony and an inter-relation between all things that belong to the spirit; as in objective life there is no isolated facts, so in *interior substance* there can be no unrelated truths. But that man must be born again in the deep sense of Christ and the mystics does not mean that he must be reincarnated, whether on earth or in another planet, even if reincarnation be otherwise an indispensable part of the eternal plan; but that upon this earth and in this planet, he *must become a new creature*. If we accept this statement as containing the keynote, and embracing the actuality of this fundamental process of Mysticism, what are we precisely to understand by becoming a new creature? How shall it be possible for us to unmake or remake ourselves? After what law or principle shall we cease to be that which we have been and attain to be that which we are not? Do the terms of the statement represent a process which is at all possible to man? Perhaps the true answer to these questions will be best reached by a reference to

the operation of the new birth. There is a large body of literature which contains the experience of the life *within*, and it is written by those who, happily for themselves and for the world, have passed through the process of regeneration as through the white waters of baptism; and that literature is substantially unanimous as to the mode and manifestation of these experiences. Not only by the terms that are employed but by the descriptions so far as they have been interpreted, we conclude that the new birth, like that of the physical man, though the fermentation and gestation thereof may extend over many days, is accomplished with a certain suddenness. Even as in Alchemy the operation of the fire and furnace proceeds during the mystical space of what is called the philosophical year, whereas the transmutation of the elements is accomplished by the change of an instant, as it were in the twinkling of an eye, following at once on the projection of the powder or stone, so is this pneumatic transmutation accomplished without let or hindrance, and the man is made anew. There are two words which are especially applied by the Mystics (Alchemists) to this process, and both are in direct relation to the suddenness of its nature. It is known

as an *interior* illustration; it is likened unto the opening of an eye, from which there pours forth the loving radiance of a divine spirit, and it falls upon the face of the seer. It is even as a lantern lifted suddenly in a dark place. It is the manifestation of the moon's wonder upon the turbid blackness of troubled waters. It is the sudden flash which followed the *Fiat lux*, when the bosom of primeval chaos was ripped by the vivid apparition of the creative beam. If we seek in moderate science for a comparison with this illustration, the phenomena of electrical energy will be found ready to our hands.

“The process comes also before us under the old word *conversion*. It is the common and conventional name; it has become almost intellectually unclean under the manipulation of many hands, and almost out of all application has it been distorted by those who have misused it. It is with many, and in many cases, a practical synonym for cant in sentiment and vulgarity in religion, for the outward chalk and the inward refuse of the proverbial whited sepulchre. And yet, after all, the name is not only good and true, accurate and philosophical, but it is in many ways the

best and the happiest which could be offered for this application. It has in some respects wider scope than is possessed by the term regeneration, for it might be taken to include that deep mystery of growth in godliness which must follow upon the new birth, even as growth follows upon birth into physical being. The word regeneration, however, is more vividly explanatory in its character, for a second birth presupposes a second conception. Now, there is only one thing which is conceived, and that is life. Thus the new birth is, in the first place, the infusion, and, in the second, the bringing forth of a new life. Consequent upon this statement there is one manifest conclusion. All life is unattainable and communicated, and even as in the physical order it is impossible that we should beget ourselves, so in the harmony of the spirit there is no spontaneous generation. An older science than biology has enunciated this truth after the *bizarre* fashion of its *veiled masters*. To make gold, say the Alchemists, we must have gold, and they who spoke after this manner were instructed in the deep things of life and of spirit. Behind their metallic mask there is the face of Psyche and the uplifted intelligence of Pneuma; at the back of their laboratories there is a

door giving entrance to the fane of God; and the flame of their physical furnace is a metaphor for the chemistry of Christ. To obtain the philosophical gold which is not the gold metallic, but a *living* substance—an *aurum vivum*—we must possess that gold which they have sought for vainly who have fossed in any mines, for it is like unto a certain kingdom which our king hath foreshown to us—it is not of this world; it is of the order of the celestial quintessence. The life of the spirit is communicated from the spirit of life, and even as no person by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature, so is it impossible by any taking thought of our own to generate the bios of the beyond.”

54. The curious reader may see much of this very subject *artificially* illustrated in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapter of Carlyle’s translation of the Travels of Wilhelm Meister, where the *Son of Anac, St. Christopher*, personates Nature, *reducing all minor harmonies to itself, and compelling those who “play out of tune” to come again into the general concord*; for Goethe was a cunning Alchemist in his way, and knew very well how to screen his thoughts in symbolism; which even Jeffrey, with all his talent,

could not see through, as his criticism upon Wilhelm Meister in the *Edinburg Review* sufficiently shows.

In saying a word or two of the *Fires*, and this should be remembered in what will follow, we only wish to show a probability that the writers intended to refer to the powers of and in nature; and more especially the *Love in man*, and that by the *three fires*, sometimes called *menstruums*, and again, at times, called *dissolvents*, they referred to their so-called *three* principles, or trinity in unity, the chief being of an "inseparable oneness" (the expression of Eyrenaeus) yet having two "components," each of which being in its kind a *fire* or *menstruum*, composed likewise of other two components, passing onto the first in some inexplicable way, though possibly to an imaginative reader not altogether inconceivable.

65. The "components" we suppose to be symbolized by Sol and Luna, as the active and passive principles of nature, or cause and effect included in one-self-existence, and these same principles, we suppose, are alluded to by Goethe in the fourteenth chapter of Meister's Travels, where, undoubtedly, the author describes symbolically his own studies into the depths of nature; in the prosecution of which he is led to an

extraordinary spectacle, in which he sees "*male* and *female* forms (the "components"), of gigantic power, in violent postures," which, he says, "reminded one of that lordly fight between heroic youths and Amazons, wherein hate and enmity at last issue in mutually regretful alliance."

66. These two principles are the two "great luminaries"—referred to by Espagnet, there being nothing in nature without them, though the words *Sol* and *Luna* are applied to a great multitude of *doubles* beside what are sometimes called *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*; as, nature and man, etc.

67. Eyrenaeus speaks of the same two principles, and refers to their harmony in one thing, including them both, as follows:

"The *bodies*"—everywhere these writers thus speak of one, two, or three *somethings*, without telling the reader what the somethings are—"the bodies, when they are *dissolved*, do transmute the aforesaid mercuries, by their own ferment, into their own nature; for the fire of Nature assimilates all that nourishes it to its own likeness; and then our mercury or menstruum vanishes, that is, it is swallowed up in the

solary nature, and all together makes but one universal *mercury*, by intimate union, and the *mercury* is the material principle of the stone; for before our *mercury* (as it was compounded of three *mercuries*) had in it two which were superficial, and the third essential to Sol and Luna only; not to the stone; for Nature would produce these two out of it by artificial decoction; but when the perfect bodies are dissolved, they are transmuted with the *mercury* that dissolved them, and then there is no more repugnancy in it,—then there is no longer a distinction between *superficial* and *essential*, but all become *essential*.

“And this is that one matter of the stone; that *one thing* which is the subject of all wonders.

“When thou art come to this, then shalt thou no more discern a distinction between the *dissolver* and the *dissolved*, for the water shall neither ascent nor descend, go out nor in alone, but the fire (spirit) of Nature shall accompany it, and the color (nature) of the *mature sulphur*, (the perfect,) which is inseparably joined, shall tincture thy water (spirit); so that thou shalt never see them severed one from the other, but shall discern them by the effect, and by the *eye of thy mind*, more than of thy body.”

67. Thus the reader is at last thrown upon the "eye of his mind" (or intellect) for the comprehension of what imagery fails to give an adequate conception of.

Concerning the philosopher's fire, Pernety tells us (the reader should remember the many explanations already made concerning the different Alchemical meanings) that:

"The reason which induced the ancient sages to make a mystery of their vessel, was the slight knowledge of the manufacture of glass which one possessed in those times. Later on the manner of making it has been discovered. Therefore the Philosophers have not concealed so much the matter and form of their vessel. Not so of their secret fire; it is a labyrinth from which the most skillful could not extricate himself.

"The fire of the sun cannot be this secret fire; it is interrupted, unequal; it cannot furnish a heat, uniform in its degrees, its measures and its duration. Its heat could not penetrate the thickness of the mountains, nor warm the coldness of marble and of rocks, which receive the mineral vapors from which gold and silver are formed.

"The fire of our stoves hinders the union of the

miscibles, and consumes or causes to evaporate the bond of the constituent parts of the bodies; it is their tyrant.

“The central fire, which is innate in matter, has the property of mixing substances, and of producing; but it cannot be that Philosophic Fire* so much praised, which causes the corruption of the metallic germs; because that which is of itself the principle of corruption, can be the principle of generation only by accident; I say by accident, because the heat which engenders is internal and innate in matter, and that which corrupts it external and foreign to matter.

“This heat is very different in the generation of the individuals of the three kingdoms. The animal possesses it in a much higher degree than the plant. The heat of the vase in the generation of the metal must be proportional to the quality of the germ whose corruption is very difficult. It is then necessary to conclude that as there is no generation without corruption, and no corruption without heat, that the heat

*See the “Philosophy of Fire,” enlarged edition, which now contains the Rosicrucian Mystery of Fire. Also “The Rosicrucians; their Teachings.”

must be proportioned to the germ which is employed for the generation.

“There are then two heats; a purifying external heat and a vital or generative internal heat. The internal fire obeys the heat of the vase until unbound and delivered from its prison, it renders itself master of it. The putrifying heat comes to its aid, it passes into the nature of the vital heat, and the two then work in concert.

“Therefore it is the vessel which administers the heat suitable to corrupt, and the germ which furnishes the fire suitable for generation; but as the heat of this vessel is not so well known for the metal as it is for the animal and the plant, it is necessary to reflect on what we have said concerning fire in general to find this heat. Nature has so proportioned it in the matrix, as far as animals are concerned, that it can scarcely be augmented or diminished; the matrix in this case is a veritable athanor.

(The athanor of the philosophers is *not* the furnace of the common chemists; it is the sophic matter itself; animated by the philosophical fire, or innate fire residing in latency in its own nature. We recommend to the reader the patient meditation of this part of the

treatise on the great art; we can assure him that he will be fully rewarded for his pains.)

“As for the heat of the vase for the corruption of the vegetable grain, very little is necessary; the sun furnishes it sufficiently. But it is not so in hermetic art. The matrix being the invention of the artist, must have a fire skillfully invented and proportioned to that in which Nature implants in the vase for the generation of mineral matters. An anonymous author says that to know the matter of this fire, it is enough to know how the elementary fire takes the form of the celestial fire, and all the secret of this form consists in the form and structure of the *athanor* (already explained), by means of which this fire becomes equal, gentle, continuous and so proportioned that the matter may be able to be corrupted, after which the generation of the sulphur must be made, which will then take the empire for some time, and will rule over the rest of the work. This is why the philosophers say that the female rules during corruption, and the hot and dry male rules during generation.

“Artephius is one of those who have treated at length of the philosophical fire; and Pontanus con-

fesses to having been corrected and has recognized his error in the reading of the treatise of this philosopher. This is what he says of it:

“ ‘Our Fire is mineral; it is uniform, continuous; it does not evaporate unless too strongly excited; it participates of the nature of sulphur; it is derived from another source than matter, it destroys all, it dissolves, congeals and calcines; it requires skill to find and to make it; it costs nothing, or very little; moreover, it is humid, vaporous, digesting, altering, penetrating, subtle, aerial, not violent, not burning, surrounding, containing and unique. It is also the fountain of living-water, or quick-water, which surrounds and encloses the places where the king and queen bathe. This humid fire suffices for all the work in the beginning, in the middle and at the end; because all art consists in this fire. There is still *a natural fire, a fire against Nature*, and an *unnatural fire*, which does not burn; finally there is a warm, dry, humid, cold fire. Think well on what I have just said, and work in the right way, without using any strange matter.’

“What this same author then adds is really an explanation of the three fires; but as he calls them *fire of*

lamps, fire of ashes, and the natural fire of our waters, one sees that he has wished to deceive. Those who desire a more detailed account of the philosophers' fire may have recourse to the *Testament* of Raymond Lully and to his *Codicil*. d'Espagnet speaks also of it from the ninety-eighth to the hundred-and-eighteenth Canon. (The teachings of d'Espagnet have already been made clear.) The other philosophers have made almost no mention of it except to conceal it, or have indicated it only by its properties. But in allegories and fables they have given this fire the names *sword, lance, arrows, javelin, battle-ax*, etc.; such was the one with which Vulcan struck Jupiter to make him give birth to Pallas: the sword which the same Vulcan gave to Peleus, the father of Achilles; the club which he presented to Hercules; the bow which this hero received from Apollo; the cimeter of Perseus; the lance of Bellerophon, etc. It is the fire which Prometheus stole from heaven; that which Vulcan employed to form the thunderbolts of Jupiter, and the arms of the gods; the belt of Venus, the golden throne of the Sovereign of the Heavens, etc. Finally, it is the fire of Vesta, so scrupulously preserved at

Rome that the vestal virgin whose duty it was to guard it, were punished by death if they permitted it to be extinguished."

68. I will here add one or two passages from Plotinus, to show by a similitude of idea that the subject of Alchemy was the same as that of the Neo-Platonist, to wit: Man, and his relation to God.

69. Plotinus has been almost universally set down as a dreamer, and it is not my province to dissent from this very convenient resort for those who have no taste for the subjects he dealt with. Possibly the truth may be that Plotinus was himself less of a dreamer than many who have read his works through their own dreaming imaginations, for here lies a principal difficulty on this subject. If any one reads Plotinus, or Plato, or any other writer upon the topics they discussed, and forgets that *the sources of truth are equally open to us all*, he can hardly escape delusion, which, however, is rather in himself than in those authors.

70. As a parallel to the passage from Eyrenaeus touching the unity or oneness of the *dissolvent* and the *dissolved* already quoted, we refer to the following

from Plotinus, where he is treating of what he calls the *Good or the One*,—the real One being God, who is neither the dissolvent nor the dissolved, the latter being what is familiarly called Nature, as if there were no mystery about our good mother.

71. The author supposes the soul properly prepared for the *vision* (as he calls it), which he also speaks of as “*a light accending to the soul*,” and then says:

“Perhaps, however, it must not be said that he sees, but that he is *the thing seen*, if it be necessary to call these things *two*; i. e., the perceiver (the dissolved,) and the perceived (the dissolvent). But both are one; *though it is bold to assert this*. Then, indeed, the soul neither sees, nor distinguishes by seeing, nor imagines that there are two things, but because as it were another thing, and not itself. Nor does that which pertains to itself contribute anything here. But becoming wholly absorbed in deity (swallowed up in the solary nature, as Eyrenaeus expressed it), she is one, conjoining *centre* with *centre*..... Hence this spectacle is a thing difficult to explain in words. For how can any one narrate that as something different from himself, which, when he sees it, he does not behold as different, but as *one with himself*.

72. For a parallel to the expression of joining *centre* to *centre*, used by Plotinus, we refer again to Eyre-naeus, who speaks of the bodies, meaning Sol and Luna, as being compared by writers to mountains, either because, as he says, they are found in mountains, or by way of opposition: "for, as mountains are highest above ground, so they (the active and passive principles of nature) lie deepest under ground;" and then adds, in his own dialect:

"But the name is not of so much consequence; take the body, which is *gold* (man), and throw it into *mercury*, such a *mercury* as is *Bottomless*; that is, whose *centre it can never find but by discovering its own*," etc.

73. How can any one fail to see that Eyre-naeus and Plotinus were treating of the same thing, and that each of them would have man seek the *centre* of the universe in *himself*, assuring us that, when found, the *dissolvent* and *dissolved* (God and Nature) will be known to be *one*? This is that centre which is said to be everywhere, but whose circumference is said to be nowhere; and if a man cannot find it in his *own* nature,—we do not say in himself as a phenomenal individual,—where shall he look for it? In the nature

of another? He will have knowledge of that other nature but through his own nature.

74. This so-called *centre* has never been named by any word conveying an idea of it, neither has it ever been described or defined so that a mere reader, who is not also a thinker, can obtain any notion of it. It has been treated of in figures and symbols in infinite ways. It has been called the one, the middle, the *mean*, the equilibrium, the eternal, the unchangeable, the immutable, the self-sufficient, the self-existent, etc., and yet not any of these words serve to make it known. The moment a name is acknowledged for it, the word becomes "ill-assorted," and its sense passes out of view; and yet this centre remains the sole foundation of philosophy, without which or out of which no man can feel any assured and continued conviction that he has the truth. Most men supply the want of it, when felt, by nerving the will to the performance of certain more or less reasonably supposed duties or ceremonies; and make it a point of conscience to war against whatever brings such a disposition into question; because, indeed, to speak in the language of Alchemy, the *aim* to be right is the white state of the stone; which,

though "incombustible," as the writers say, admits, nevertheless, of a higher perfection, when the *aim* to be right becomes the *right aim*; for then the truth is possessed free from all sense of doubt or struggle, with a sort of infinite or inexpressive conviction that it never has been, and never can be, other than it is; and that whatever does not share it must perish. No man ever had a glimpse of it, who did not feel his whole being carried away by it; and upon such a man all eloquence is wasted, the aim of which is to win him to renounce the vision.

Before going further with this subject, let us look at the gnostic teachings concerning these things. In a letter before me from a student I take the following:

"The secret doctrines unveil the mysteries and carry the Neophyte into a knowledge of the infinite—define space—analyze being, turn the great microscope of revelation upon life and give a fair understanding of the origin of all things. These doctrines reveal the fact that life is universal—and life does not go out, the life that is, was and will be forever—life is immortal—death is not extinction of life. It is but an alchemical process of change. Death is but an open door to a grander life.

“A sphere is the symbol of the infinite—a sphere which has its centre everywhere and its circumference nowhere and this is Fohat, the principle of principles, the causeless cause of all things. If we desire to know the nature of Fohat (force or energy) we must look to see how Fohat builds.

We think of sulphur-sun-fire-sol, which is the metallic builder. It builds through the agency of mercury-akasha, which becomes a body for the operation of light. We think of mercury, the mystery of magic. Mercury called the virgin of Nature. Nitrogen-azoth, the virgin of the world, then the seven “tatwas” being really our seven planets or states of the *one* dual substance and wonder how a seeker after truth is to understand the art of regeneration. Fire purifies the dross; Agni is *the mediator*, call him mercury or *Christ*, or what you will. It is said the great art is to volatilize the fixed and fix the volatile, to concentrate the etheric substance into a solid visible mould—then again it is said in our coction we first reduce the fixed to the volatile, then we make the volatile fixed and we have what we seek. The philosophers say God will reveal to us if found worthy.

“Is it possible to transform base metals (common passions) into gold,—immortal sublimated spirit? Sol and Luna; positive and negative; solar forces are ever on the wing. The secret of life they blend in hidden majesty. Sat and tat; solar and luner forces; sulphur and mercury—mercury, the first principle of *all* metals and the mystery of magic.

“The Rosicrucians teach how the base metals, meaning the animal energies in man, can be transformed into pure gold of true spirituality and that by attaining spiritual light *oneness* with God—man is re-deemed.

“We all know the legend, as old as initiation itself, that every one initiated into the mysteries, even in any secret order, must ‘ride the goat.’ This idea has wholly been borrowed from the mystic orders, for in all times past every neophyte who has entered the temple service of the mystics has come by the way of Egypt. (Capricorn is and ever has been symbolized by the goat.) That is, the neophyte puts off all pre-conceived ideas of flesh and learns the laws of Christ, who is born in Capricorn. Each sign of the Zodiac rules some part of the earth and Capricorn rules

Egypt—the land of darkness—the land of mysteries—where death is transmuted into life. Every initiate must become an Alchemist who can volatilize the fixed and fix the volatile—in this arc (ark) of Capricorn is where the divine workman learns to fix the volatile—in other words, learns the magic art of concentration. Out of Egypt have I called my son—in this land of darkness perfected humanity is born—is tried—is developed, then journeys to Cancer, whence the way to the Throne of Universal Power is opened. All power in heaven and in earth is given unto humanity perfected.

“The ————— in his journey of the heavens, represents the *fall* or *death*—burial—ressurrection and *ascension* of *man*, Sol will soon recede from the royal arch—the key stone of the heavens. The King has been in his glory, but will fall from his high estate. He will enter the domain of the woman—Virgo, a fall of great heighth, be brought to the bar of justice. Libra, in a greater fall on the cross. The wonderful journey of ————— is the same as the mythical twelve labors of Hercules and is the journey of every mystic who has attained unto celestial honors.

“Before we can conquer all selfishness and become spiritual minded, a great battle must be fought; the secret of transmutation must be found. Selfishness shows up in so many forms that it surprises us. Then again, how are we ever to control the five senses? This is the great work.

“Truth is the light of Zah-veh and is man’s *lunum interum*—inner light—and is identical with the Logos, or that light that enlightens every one who comes into the world. This truth, this sun, this light, this Christ *within*, is the illuminator. Neophytes or those striving to gain the heights of illumination, and have not yet attained, are believers—the knowledge of the gnostic (knower) does not come at first call. It is not usually a plant of rapid growth and requires years of effort for most persons to become entirely illuminated, and some are said to pass through many earth lives on the path to perfection.

“Again, we are told that when the five senses are overcome the spirit has joined the soul, they are one—have attained onement with the Infinite. It is said that the evolution of souls is the fixing of the volatile—coagulation of spirit. Christ, or Christos, means the

Spirit of God—the master principle of the developed man. All action and reaction beyond the mere physical are the result of alchemic procedure in the hands of one in physical garb. Will is not only the solvent for all substances, but it is the key to all secret doors and all mysteries to open the way to all lower mysteries. Will is the alchemic solvent and key that must be used and here is where the human and the divine coalize—spiritual psychometry.

“The consummation of initiation is the Perfect Master—*Christos*. They are the goal, the perfect consummation of human evolution. By constant struggle and daily conflict the Master has conquered *self* when the fixed is volatilized, the magician is *free*.

“The fixing of the volatile—coagulation of spirit—there are two classes in the universe—the volatile and the fixed. The volatile is the eternal condition of spirit; fixed is the manifestation of matter. Universal spirit is personal (Acts 17:28). Lord is God manifest. The living fire and the life *principle* and *will* the same power of the universe, are the motors of all magical operations. The living fire is the means by which all phenomena is produced, but the will is the power of

deity behind the flame that uses and directs it. Will is the sovereign power before which spirit bends as the leaves in the rustling storm. Having become master of self and gained control of your own mind and your own body, you may now expect to control things outside of yourself.

“There are two different paths of initiation. By one of them we develop the powers which are innate in us to their utmost extent; by the other we subdue ourselves and thus attain a state of being which renders us susceptible to the action of the cosmic forces which surround us. Although these two methods differ completely, we can accomplish this great work by following either of them. This is the meaning of the hermetic precept that the philosopher’s stone can be prepared by the dry path or by the moist, by the red dye or by the white.

“Christ is the life, the light in whom all persons live and move, which may be crystalized into a living individuality that will take complete possession of the child of God and become in him a fountain of living water springing up into eternal life. That the wonderful work of crystalizing this light, individualizing the

universe, forming the Christos *within* is the great mystery of the ages we know, and when this Christ has been formed *within* you you have taken great strides toward the heights of divine illumination and no advance can be made in this direction until you are *in the light* and know the secret of crystalizing the light and have entered your alchemic laboratory and have begun manipulating the elements in 'fixing the volatile.'

"The Akasa is the Hindu veil for mercury; Prana, for sulphur; Sun-fire respectively 'Isis and Osiris.' Fohat is the Hindu expression for the alchemical sulphur or Sol, which is the metallic builder. He builds through the agency of mercury, Luna-Azoth, etc., which become a body for the operation of this light. Hermes calls man's body a mineral. What then is the human body but a constellation of the same powers that form the stars in the sky? Man being the son of the microcosm, has in him all the mineral elements, therefore we must study the management of the elementary forces of being (called Alchemy). The mystery of the world rests upon the mystery of the cross. Perfection is realized just in proportion as the

positive and negative energies of the eternal existent elements are harmoniously blended or crossed. Ananda said *Sat* is pure consciousness. According to this Brahman the one existence, the absolute represents the same. In Jennings' works it is said *Sat* is the fountainhead of *all* existence, 'Parabraham' the causeless cause of the universe. The absolute all—'Sat is masculine and feminine' and is also called Sat, Sat-Urn and Christ. It is said where carbon is, life is there, for carbon is the basis of organic life. In the orthodox Church we are taught that Christ knocks at the door of every heart—we have seen people shout until they were exhausted when they were said to be converted, but this is the prostitution of true conversion, as already explained. The heart contains secret chambers just as has been stated before. 'Chitta' is mind substance. Intellect has been called the 'transparent essence' that lies back of action or creation. The word intellect in Sanscrit means *Buddhi*—'Christ,' which means the determinative faculty or *will*. When it is dissolved we have the state of being—the I am-ness. The sixth tattva is soul knowledge—intuition. The sixth ether Cardiferous

(‘is Christ’) of the true mystic of the heart. The heart is the seat of life. Kardiferous ether knocks at the door of the heart. It is out of the heart man speaketh and in the Upanishads it is said we are to eagerly seek the spirit—the conscious self (the one existence—the absolute). ‘Sat is the self.’ The city of Brahman the body and in it the palace, (the small lotus of the heart) and in it that small ether that is to be sought for—that is to be understood—as large as ether (all space) is so large as that ether within the heart. Both heaven and earth are contained within it, both fire and air, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars, both Sol and Luna, and whatever there is of him (the self) here in the world and whatever has been, or will be, all that is contained within it. The true self, Brahman dwelling in the heart.

“Hermes says the lost word means light, and this light is the magical mercury—Christ the builder of life. Soliris says: ‘Light not only modifies but creates all substances because light in its essence is divine truth, is God Himself.’ Then *Sat* for a *truth* means this ‘fire and air *all*.’ Man’s body is congealed air in which the fire (or light) plays—we come from ether and will return to ether. ‘Adiramled, the astral

light, is the quintessence of vibration, universal fluid—soul of the world—primordial light and cosmic Christ.’

“It is an eternal truth that without our secret magical fire nothing can be accomplished in our art. Whoever kills his sensual desires and sacrifices them upon the altar of his soul—then the animal symbols in his astral light are destroyed by the magic fire of spiritual *will*. Agni is the mediator, call him mercury or Christ. Fire purifies the dross. Agni joined to Pneuma, or Pneuma Psyche (the soul), or fire to air, or water to earth,—these are facts of which Jesus Christ (or the hermaphrodite mercury) is the eternal symbol.”*

75. As an illustration of the probable meaning of Eyrenaeus, there is a passage in Crauford’s India, which some may think much to the point. In reference to the philosophy of the Hindoos, Crauford introduces a commentary upon the *Vedanta* school, by Dr. I. Taylor, in which we may easily fancy an allusion to the two *luminaries* of Espagnet, and their unity, to wit:

“I think we may infer that the philosophy of the

*Catherine R. Headley.

followers of the Vedanta school is founded on the contemplation of one Infinite Being, existing under two states or modifications. The first, that of a pure, simple, abstract essence, immovable and quiescent; the second, that of being displayed in motion, or active qualities. Under the first modification, he is named Brimh, or *the Great Being*, and Kutasth, or *He who sitteth on high*; under the second, he is named Eesh, *the Lord*, and Jiv, *the soul*; or, to adapt this explanation to the division already given to these modifications, and to the example by which they were illustrated, we should say that Brimh is being in its state of simple essence; Eesh is being exerting energy, and causing the phenomena of the material universe; Kutasth is being existing in sensitive creatures in its pure, simple state. But perhaps it would be more agreeable to the etymology of the words to call Eesh the principle of energy or power, and Jiv the principle of sensation.

“Everything rests on Brimh, or being; but to him is more immediately referred Eesh, or power; and to Kutasth is referred Jiv, or sensation.”

76. Here we have the *one*, and *two attributes*, as

some moderns have called them; or, nature considered in itself, then *natura naturans* (or nature active), and *natura naturata* (or nature passive); or, in other words, nature as cause and nature as effect. Yet the Hindoo considered the two as one, for the comment proceeds as follows:

“In the common books and languages, these terms denote separate individual beings; and also in some philosophical systems, Brimh, or being, and Jiv, that which feels, are considered distinct and different beings; but the Vedantas deny a plurality of *beings*, and assert that the visible phenomena and sensation are only accidents of one infinite being, though, in order to be understood, they speak of them as distinct existences; hence, then, it appears that the Vedanta philosophy is distinguished from all the other systems, by teaching that *the universe consists of one undivided, indivisible being, and motion.....*

“The reason assigned for attending to these distinctions also corroborates the explanation we have offered. It is not to point out different substances, or beings, but to conduct the mind to the knowledge of that *one and all-pervading essence*, in which the modifications exist, from which result the distinctions we

observe. Unless the nature of these distinctions were understood, the soul must remain ignorant of its own nature (i. e., cannot know itself) and continue forever under the delusion that it is a sensitive, finite, individual being; but when, by investigation these distinctions, it comprehends the modifications from which they arise, the delusion is dispelled, and it knows itself to be one, *infinite and eternal*.....

“They who are ignorant of the undivided being, Brimh, the principle, the impassible one, dispute concerning Jiv and Eesh, the soul and divine spirit; but when this delusion is dispersed, all these distinctions vanish, and there exists only one quiescent spirit.”

77. There is no wish to refer the reader to Hindoo philosophy or mysticism for his faith. The object is, by such extracts, simply to indicate a correspondence of thought, by which it may seem probable that the genuine Alchemists had some mode of conceiving all things as *one*, in some sense; and that his speculations had no reference whatever to making gold. Let the student, if he would make trial of their system, first put himself into perfect unity in his own conscience,—let him be absolutely right himself,—and he may then

discover in what the distractions of life consist, and in what sense even these make a part of the true unity.

78. We have no desire to recommend these studies, for we know very well that Goethe had his eye upon such speculations in the remark, expressing the most profound "experience," that man is not born to solve the problem of the universe; though (he added) he must make the attempt in order to know how to restrain himself with the limits of the comprehensible. Eyrenaeus has the candor to caution the student not to attempt to practice barely upon his words. Why, then, did he write? Perhaps only to direct attention already awakened, so that a curiosity, ordinary in its origin, might have a divine issue,—as "Saul found a kingdom while seeking his father's asses."

Every known master has given the same warning to the seeker and E. Levi, in his work "Transcendental Magic," says:

"The operations of science are not devoid of danger, as we have stated several times. They may end in madness for those who are not established firmly on the basis of the supreme, absolute, and infallible reason. Terrible and incurable diseases can be occasioned by excessive nervous excitement. Swoons

and death itself, as a consequence of cerebral congestion, may result from imagination when it is unduly impressed and terrified. We cannot sufficiently dissuade nervous persons, and those who are naturally disposed to exaltation, women, young people, and all who are not habituated in perfect self-control and the command of their fear. In the same way, there can be nothing more dangerous than to make magic a pastime, or, as some do, a part of an evening's entertainment. Even magnetic experiments, performed under such conditions, can only exhaust the subject, mislead opinions, and defeat science. The mysteries of life and death cannot be made sport of with impunity, and things which are to be taken seriously must be treated not only seriously but also with the greatest reserve. Never yield to the desire of convincing others by phenomena. The most astounding phenomena would not be proofs for those who are not already convinced. They can always be attributed to ordinary artifices and the Mugus included among the more or less skillful followers of Robert Houdin or Hamilton. To require prodigies as a warrant for believing in science is to show one's self unworthy or incapable of science.

Sancta Sanctis. Contemplate the twelfth figure of the Tarot-keys, remember the grand symbol of Prometheus, and be *silent*. All those magi who divulged their works died violently, and many were driven to suicide, like Cardan, Schroppfer, Cagliostro, and others. The magus should live in retirement, and be approached with difficulty.

“In order to devote ourselves to ceremonial magic, we must be free from anxious preoccupations; we must be in a position to procure all the instruments of the science, and be able to make them when needed; we must also possess an inaccessible laboratory, in which there will be no danger of ever being surprised or disturbed. Then, and this is an indispensable condition, we must know how to equilibrate forces and restrain the zeal of our initiative. This is the meaning of the eighth key of Hermes, wherein a woman is seated between two pillars, with an upright sword in one hand and a balance in the other. To equilibrate forces they must be simultaneously maintained and made to act alternately; the use of the balance represents this double action. The same arcanum is typified by the dual cross in the pentacles of Pythagoras and Ezekiel,

where the crosses equilibrate each other and the planetary signs are always in opposition. Thus, Venus is the equilibrium of the works of Mars; Mercury moderates and fulfills the operations of the sun and moon; Saturn balances Jupiter. It was by means of this antagonism between the ancient gods that Prometheus, that is to say, the genius of science, contrived to enter Olympus and carry off fire from heaven. Is it necessary to speak more clearly? The milder and calmer you are, the more effective will be your anger; the more energetic you are, the more precious will be your forbearance; the more skillful you are, the better will you profit by your intelligence and even by your virtues; the more indifferent you are, the more easily will you make yourself loved. This is a matter of experience in the moral order, and is literally realized in the sphere of action. Human passions produce blindly the opposites of their unbridled desire, when they act without direction. Excessive love produces antipathy; blind hate counteracts and scourges itself; vanity leads to abasement and the most cruel humiliations. Thus, the Great Master revealed a mystery of positive magical science when He said, "Forgive your enemies, do good to those that hate you, so shall ye

heap coals of fire upon their heads." Perhaps this kind of pardon seems hypocrisy and bears a strong likeness to refined vengeance. But we must remember that the Magnus is sovereign, and a sovereign never avenges because he has the right to punish; in the exercise of this right he performs his duty, and is implacable as justice. Let it be observed, for the rest, so that no one may misinterpret my meaning, that it is a question of chastising evil by good and opposing mildness to violence. If the exercise of virtue be a flagellation for vice, no one has the right to demand that it should be spared, or that we should take pity on its shame and its sufferings."

"The man who dedicates himself to the world of science must take moderate daily exercise, abstain from prolonged vigils, and follow a wholesome and regular rule of life. He must avoid the effluvia of putrefaction, the neighborhood of stagnant water, and indigestible, impure or animal foods. Above all, he must daily seek relaxation from magical preoccupations amongst material cares, or in labor, whether artistic, industrial, or commercial. The way to see well is not to be always looking; and he who spends his

whole life upon one object will end without attaining it. Another precaution must be equally observed, and that is never to experiment when ill."

Coming back to the unity of things and the art, we cite the following from the Hermetic Triumph:

"It is a certain truth," says Eudoxus, manifestly speaking in name of the author, "that, in all the different states of the stone, the *two* things that are united to give it a new birth come from one sole and same thing; it is upon this foundation of nature that Cosmopolita supports the incontestable truth in our philosophy, that is to say, *that of one is made two, and of two one; in which all operations, natural and philosophical, are terminated without the possibility of going further.*"

"So," Plotinus says, "all things are double; *the one two*; and, again, *two* passes into one. (Page 467 of Taylor's "Select Works of Plotinus.")

79. This accords with Eccl. xxxii:15 and xlii:24. Two of the principles of the Alchemists are often called extremes; but an invisible *one* includes the *two* inseparably, as one idea with two images; or, as we may say, one nature of spirit and matter; or, again, as in the microcosm, one man of soul and body.

80. When the idea is once realized, its illustrations become multitudinous. As a very simple example—in Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*, we read that “wronging and being wronged being two extremes, caused by excess and deficiency, *justice* came by equality in the middle.” Justice is the regulating principle of the universe, operating silently and invisibly, but as surely, as it is absolutely beyond the control of man. It is the immovable fulcrum of the balance,—the central point of the magnet with its two poles, neither of which constitutes a magnet in itself.

81. “We may see, also,—whether it has anything to do with the subject or not,—that we have not two distinct senses by which to determine or form an opinion of what is right and what is wrong; but only one sense variously affected. The same sense determines what is wrong, which is employed in deciding upon what is right, and if this “eye be dark how great is the darkness.”

82. Desire, again, is by some said to be the root of all the passions, which are manifested in *doubles*. Thus, joy is desire gratified; sorrow is desire obstructed or defeated; hope is the prospect of gratified

desire; fear, the prospect of defeated desire;—and so on for a long train of doubles, one of the two belonging to the superficial class,—to excess or deficiency, as Plato might say (see the Statesman),—coming and going in time, while the essential remains, in itself invisible and out of relation to time,—a perpetual activity, or *conatus*, as it was formerly called.

83. But desire and love are substantially synonymous terms, for we love and *seek* what we desire, and so we desire and *seek* what we love; yet neither love nor desire is, by any necessary connection, directed to one thing rather than another, but either, under conditions suitable to it, may be directed to anything; from which it follows, that it is possible to make God, the eternal, its object; or, call it truth, and we may see that its fruition may partake of its own nature.

84. We read, that *it is not common for man to love and pursue the good and the true because they are of this nature; but, on the contrary, and herein lies the great error of life, we call that good which we desire.* From all which we may see that vast consequences depend upon the subject of desire, which, as is said, may as naturally be the eternal as the transient,—the at-

tainable and enduring as well as the unattainable and the unendurable,—when suitable conditions exist for it. But here great caution is necessary to guard against merely mechanical, or purely fanciful, theories in dealing with this subject.

85. Nowhere in books of the genuine Alchemists is there any tendency to mere mechanical theories. One writer dates the commencement of an important advance from his discovering, as he says, that Nature acts magically, and not peripatetically (referring to Aristotle). Another rebukes a formalist by the question, “Can you tell the reason why a lion shakes his tail when he is angry, and a dog when he is pleased?”

86. Another point ought to be mentioned touching desire and love,—that aversion, the opposite of desire; and hate, the opposite of love; are not independent affections, but exist in virtue of desire and love respectively: that is, we do not naturally hate anything in itself, but we hate that which impedes or obstructs us in the pursuit of what we love; and so, in like manner, we are averse to and turn from what hinders us in the prosecution of what we desire. If, then, desire be turned to one only eternal thing, the nature of man taking its character from his leading or chief

desire, the whole man is gradually converted to, or, as some think, transmuted into, that one thing, provided, we know the true one only eternal thing. But to know this one only thing is the secret of Alchemy. This must be that which Plato speaks of, as being contained in the smallest compass; which, once possessed, can never be forgotten or lost but which cannot be learned like other knowledge."

E. Levi, one of the greatest Mystics or Alchemists of the nineteenth century, did not exactly recognize the two in one and one in two, but he rather turns to the theory of the Trinity and he tells us that:

"Grammar itself attributes three persons to the verb. The first is that which speaks, the second that which is spoken to, and the third the object. In creating, the Infinite Prince speaks to himself of himself. Such is the explanation of the triad and the origin of the dogma of the Trinity. The magical dogma is also one in three and three in one. That which is above is like or equal to that which is below. Thus, two things which resemble one another and the word which signifies their resemblance makes three. This would then be really the dogma of Plotinus for he recognizes the

two and then recognizing the word would make the trinity. The triad is the universal dogma. In magic—principle, realization, adaptation; in Alchemy, Azoth, in corporation, transmutation; in theology—God, incarnation, redemption; in the human soul—thought, love and action; in the family—father, mother, and child. The triad is the end and supreme expression of love; we seek one another as two only to become three.

“There are three intelligible worlds which correspond one with another by hierarchic analogy; the natural or physical, the spiritual or metaphysical, and the divine or religious worlds. From this principle follows the hierarchy of spirits, divided into three orders, and again subdivided by the triad in each of these three orders.

“All these revelations are logical deductions from the first mathematical notions of being and number. Unity must multiply itself in order to become active. An indivisible, motionless, and sterling principle would be unity dead and incomprehensible. Were God only one He would never be creator or father. Were he two there would be antagonism or division in the infinite, which would mean the division also or death

of all possible things. He is therefore three for the creation by Himself and in His image of the infinite multitude of beings and numbers. So is He truly one in Himself and triple in our conception, which also brings us to behold Him as triple in Himself and one in our intelligence and our love. This is a mystery for the faithful, and a logical necessity for the initiate into the absolute and real sciences.

“The word manifested by life is realization or incarnation. The life of the word accomplishing its cyclic movement is adaptation or redemption. This triple dogma was known in all sanctuaries illuminated by the tradition of the sages. Do you wish to ascertain which is the true religion? Seek that which realizes most in the divine order, which humanizes God and makes man divine, which preserves the triadic dogma intact, which clothes the word with flesh by making God manifest in the hands and eyes of the most ignorant, which finally is by its doctrine suitable to all and can adapt itself to all—the religion which is hierarchic and cyclic, having allegories and images for children, an exalted philosophy for grown men, sublime hopes and sweet consolations for the old.

“The principle of harmony is in unity, and it is

this which imparts such power to the uneven number in magic. Now, the most perfect of the odd numbers is three, because it is the trilogy of unity. In the trigrams of Fohi, the superior triad is composed of three yang, or masculine figures, because nothing passive can be admitted into the idea of God, considered as the principle of production in the three worlds. For the same reason, the Christian trinity by no means permits the personification of the mother, who is implicitly included in that of the son. For the same reason, also, it is contrary to the laws of hieratic and orthodox symbology to personify the Holy Ghost under the form of a woman. Woman comes forth from man as nature comes forth from God; so Christ ascends Himself to heaven, and assumes the Virgin Mother; we speak of the ascension of the Saviour, and the assumption of the Mother of God. God, considered as Father, has Nature for His daughter! as Son, He has the Virgin for His mother and the Church for His bride; as Holy Spirit, He regenerates and fructifies humanity. Hence, in the trigrams of Fohi, the three inferior *yin* correspond to the three superior *yang*, for these trigrams constitute a pantacle like that of the

two triangles of Solomon, but with a triadic interpretation of the six points of the blazing star.

“Every speech possesses three senses, every act has a triple bearing, every form a triple idea, for the absolute corresponds from world to world by its forms. Every determination of human will modifies nature, affects philosophy, and is written in heaven. There are, therefore, two fatalities, the one resulting from the uncreated will in its accord with wisdom, the other from created will according with the necessity of secondary causes in their correspondence with the First Cause. There is hence nothing indifferent in life, and our apparently most simple resolutions frequently determine an incalculable series of benefits or evils, above all in the affinities of our diaphane with the great magical agent, as we shall explain.

“The triad, being the fundamental principle of the whole Kabbalah, or sacred tradition of our fathers, was necessarily the fundamental dogma of Christianity, the apparent dualism of which it explains by the intervention of a harmonious and all-powerful unity. Christ did not put his teachings into writing, and only revealed them in secret to his favored disciples, the one kabbalist, and he a great kabbalist,

among the apostles. So is the apocalypse the book of the gnosis or secret doctrine of the first Christians, the key of which doctrine is indicated by an occult versicle of the Lord's Prayer, which the vulgate leaves untranslated, while in the Greek rite, which preserves the traditions of St. John, the priests only are permitted to pronounce it. This versicle, completely kabbalistic, is found in the text of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and in several Hebrew copies. The sacred word Malchuth substituted for Kether, which is its kabbalistic correspondent, and the balance of Geburah and Chesed, repeating itself in the circles or heavens called eons by the Gnostics, provided the keystone of the whole Christian temple in this occult versicle. It has been retained by Protestants in their New Testament, without recovering its lofty and wonderful meaning, which would have unveiled to them all the mysteries of the apocalypse. But it is a tradition in the Church that the manifestation of these mysteries is held over to the last times.

“Malchuth, based upon Geburah and Chesed, is the temple of Solomon having Jochin and Boaz for its pillars; it is the adamic doctrine founded, for the one part, on the resignation of Abel and, for the other, on

the labors and self-reproach of Cain; it is the equilibrium of being established on necessity and liberty, stability and motion; it is the demonstration of the universal lever sought in vain by Archimedes. A scholar whose whole talents were employed in being obscure, who died without seeking to be understood, resolved this supreme equation, discovered by him in the Kabbalah, and was in dread of its source transpiring if he expressed himself more clearly. We have seen one of his disciples and admirers most indignant, perhaps in good faith, at the suggestion that his master was a Kabbalist, but we can state notwithstanding, to the glory of the same learned man, that his researches have appreciably shortened our work in the occult sciences, and that the key of the transcendent Kabbalah above all, indicated in the arcane versicle recently cited, has been skillfully applied to an absolute reform of all the sciences in the books of Hoene Wronski.

“The kabbalistic tetragram, Jodheva, expresses God in humanity and humanity in God. The four astronomical cardinal points are, relatively to us, the yea and the nay of light—east and west—and the yea and nay of warmth—south and north. As we have already

said, according to the sole dogma of the Kabbalah, that which is in visible nature reveals that which is in the domain of invisible nature, or secondary causes are in strict proportion and analogous to the manifestations of the First Cause. So is this First Cause invariably revealed by the cross—that unity made up of two, that key to the mysteries of India and Egypt, the Tau of the patriarchs, the divine sign of Osiris, the Stauros of the Gnostics, the keystone of the temple, the symbol of occult Masonry; the cross, central point of the junction of the right angles of two infinite triangles; the cross, which in the French language seems to be the first root and fundamental substantive of the verb to believe and the verb to grow, this combining the conceptions of Science, Religion, and Progress.

“Man is the microcosm or little world, and, according to the doctrine of analogies, whatsoever is in the great world is reproduced in the small. Hence we have three centres of fluidic attraction and projection—the brain, the heart or epigastric region, and the genital organ. Each of these instruments is double—in other words, we find the suggestion of the triad therein. Each attracts on one side and repels on

another. It is by means of these apparatuses that we place ourselves in communication with the universal fluid transmitted into us by the nervous system. These three centres are, moreover, the seat of the threefold magnetic operation. When the Magnus has attained lucidity, whether through the meditation of a pythoness, or by his own development, he communicates and directs at will the magnetic vibrations in the whole mass of the astral light, the currents of which he divides by means of the magic rod."

In "Vita" we find that: "There are two men in one, a fleshly man and a spiritual man; an external and an internal man; one who sickens, fades and dies, and one who never suffers, never fades and never dies; one an angel, the other an animal—and to which we yield ourselves servants, his servants we are.

"In this connection *Goethe* puts into the mouth of Faust, in reply to the materialistic philosopher, these words:

"But in my heart, alas! two souls reside.

Each from the other tries to separate.

One clings to earth with passions and desires

And fond embrace; the other breaks his bonds,

And rising upward, spurns the dust of earth."

“This duality of mind, and the line of demarkation between the two, is the most subtle question known to man. Upon this reef the staunchest ships have foundered. Jesus gave the key, but his followers lost it and substituted for the Science of Life which He taught, the doctrine that salvation is attainable only through the blood of the crucified man. Salvation will never come through blood, but from the understanding of truth. Through science the seeming will be separated from the real, the counterfeit from the genuine.”

87. Regarding the use of the word *fire* by the Alchemists, they used this word to indicate, among other things, trials of all sorts, to which man is exposed. The writers say of their *stone*, that it can endure, in this sense, any *fire*, saying, in another sense, that it is fire itself; for nature, as a principle, cannot be consumed in itself, all of its metamorphoses being superficial, and transient, the substance remaining subject only to the power of God, the eternal *conatus* or force by which it exists.

88. With regard to interpretation in general, the reader will find many useful rules in the Tract by Plutarch, entitled “How a Young Man ought to Hear,

or Read, Poems,"—where examples of poetry are given, drawn from the most ancient poets, with explanations derived from principles of philosophy we must understand truth, or, finally, *Nature*. Plutarch, indeed, assumes that this philosophy is true, and then endeavors to "accommodate and reconcile" poetry to it; but we may remember that philosophy itself must be tested by the possibility of nature; and then the rules furnished by Plutarch for the interpretation of poetry will be seen to be applicable to the interpretations of philosophy also, for nature is, prior to all philosophies or revelations of nature.

89. Some of Plutarch's rules and applications are so pertinent to the subject in hand, that we will recite a few, which the ingenious reader may find applicable to other subjects:

"But of all things," says he, "it is most necessary, and no less profitable, if we design to receive profit, and not injury, from the poets (the ancient mythological poets are referred to), that we understand how they made use of the *names* of gods; as also of the terms of *evil* and *good*; and what they mean by the *soul*, and *fortune* and *fate*; and whether these words

are always taken by them in one and the same sense, or rather sometimes in various senses; and so of many other words."

"Whensoever, therefore, anything is spoken in poems (or in any other books whatever, we may add) concerning *gods*, or *daemons*, or *virtue*, that is absurd or harsh, he that takes such sayings for truths is thereby misled in his apprehension, and corrupted with an erroneous opinion."

In this connection Plutarch quotes:

"Joyed was the goddess, for she much did prize
A man that was alike both just and wise,"—

and says, that we are taught by it, that "Deity delights not in a rich or a strong man; but in one that is furnished with both wisdom and justice."

"Again," he continues, "when the same goddess (Minerva) saith, that the reason why she did not desert or neglect Ulysses was,

"'Cause he was wise, and gallant things designed,
And pondered noble projects in his mind,"—

She therein tells us, that, of all things pertaining to us, nothing is dear to the gods but that wherein we re-

semble them, to wit, our *virtues*; seeing that *liking is produced by likeness*."

90. In another place Plutarch cites a line to that effect that,

"Except what men think such, there's nothing
good or ill."

Which he says must be corrected by reference to another, thus:

"But what's so is so, think men what they will."

These two lines express, we may see, doctrine in Plutarch (as it is also in Plato) stated in the third question of the sixth part of the *Symposiacs*, to wit:

"*That* must first exist which hath no need of any other thing that it may exist; and *that* after, which cannot be without the concurrence on another thing;" for the second of the above lines expressed what is called the *substance* of things, the first expressing its qualities or accidents, as Aristotle called them.

91. In this unostentatious passage Plutarch has exactly hit off the definitions of *substance* and *mode*, by a distinguished philosopher of the seventeenth century (Spinoza),—the very root of his philosophy.

92. The protection of the student against delusion

in such definitions is to ask himself what idea he has of *anything*, to the existence of which nothing is conceived as necessary but itself; but he must not look to books for any such ideas. Plutarch quotes:

“Of counsel given to mischievous intents,

The man that gives it most of all repents;”—

and he explains that these lines “are of near kin to what we find in the determinations of Plato, in his books entitled “Gorgias, and Concerning the Commonwealth; to wit, “*that it is worse to do than to suffer injury: and, that a man more endamageth himself when he hurts another, than he would be damnified if he were the sufferer.*” Because, to be injured is outward; but to injure is an inward wrong; the one is a surface injury, the other vital, etc. He then quotes:

“Seest not how *Jove*, because he cannot lie,

Nor vaunt, nor laugh at impious drollery,

And pleasure’s charms are things to him unknown,

Among the Gods wears the imperial crown?”

And he tells us, that these lines teach “the same doctrine that is found in Plato, to wit, ‘*that the Divine Nature alone is incapable of feeling joy or grief.*’

93. This doctrine occurs in Plato’s Third Letter, (to

Dionysius,) and is stated in the Philebus, correctly translated by Taylor, Vol. p. 511, but inaccurately rendered by Burges, Vol. IV, p. 47. As this doctrine, as stated in Philebus, comes from Protarchus (in the Dialogue), instead of Socrates, we might consider it a mere suggestion to be overthrown in the course of the Dialogue; but the same doctrine being stated directly by Plato in the letter referred to, we are at liberty to consider it a definitely formed opinion, and must explain it by reference to the notion previously expressed, of *that*, which exists of itself; or *that*, to the conception of which no other conception is necessary. This *existence of itself*, as it is sometimes called, is what was supposed without quality, and therefore incapable of either pleasure or pain. We only refer to this to exhibit Plutarch's mode of illustration, and return to Alchemic volumes:

“The history of the medieval persecutions of Alchemists,” says “Adiramled,” “together with one's knowledge of the cupidity and treachery of the *present* world, would, I think, be sufficient to either seal his (the Alchemists) lips or cause him to *revail* the knowledge from all save the *tested and trusted* few.*

* This subject has been treated in one of the former

“The experience of the Cosmopolite and of Philalthes proves this sufficiently. ‘We are,’ says the latter, ‘enveloped in malediction and infamy; we cannot enjoy tranquilly the society of our friends; whosoever will discover who we are, will wish either to extort from us our secret, or to plan our ruin, if we refuse to reveal it to them. The world today is so wicked and so perverse; interest and ambition so dominate men that all their actions have no other aim but the satisfaction of these passions. Do we wish, as the Apostles, to perform works of mercy, and return to us evil for good. I have made the trial of this lately in some

volumes, but I quote here from Pernety: “Philosophers are not so common as physicians. They are few in number. They possess the secret of curing all maladies. They are not lacking in the desire to do good to all the world; but this world is so perverse that it is dangerous for them to try it. (To the proof of this, see my work “A Fight for Liberty,” where one of the worst persecutions of the age is shown in full. R. S. C.) They would do so, at the risk of their lives. Will they cure some one as by miracle? A murmur will be heard among the Physicians and the People; and even those who most doubted the existence of the Philosophical Remedy will then suspect that there is such a thing. This man will be followed; his actions will be observed; the report will spread; the avaricious, the ambitious will pursue him to discover his secret. Then, what can he hope for but persecutions, or voluntary exile from his country?

distant places. I have cured, as by miracle, some dying ones, abandoned by Physicians; and to escape persecution, I have been obliged, more than once, to change my name, my dress, to shave my hair and my beard, and to flee under cover of the night. Yet, to what greater dangers would a Philosopher not expose himself, if he should make the transmutation? Although he should intend to make use of the gold for a very simple life, and for the benefit of those in need.

“I know that many Physicians exercise their profession, not so much through self-interest as through the desire of serving the public: but all of them are not so. Some will rejoice at the good fortune of their neighbor, others will be angry because they have been deprived of a chance to increase their revenues.”

“And here let me give a word of advice to students. It has been proven in all times that only those who apprehend the *value of silence* ever come into possession of this Truth.

“It is something that never yet has been transmitted by word of mouth. It is projected by the thought of more advanced minds, and gained only through intuitional perception *in the Silence*.

"Only one person should ever share this confidence with another, and that other should be a true and loving companion of the opposite sex.

"It is advisable for two to work and think together, because in this way the thought becomes wholly sexed,* intellect supplements intuition and results are apt to be surer and quicker.

"Not that it is impossible to come into this unfoldment alone. ** Many of the older Alchemists were monks, one was a cardinal, one a pope, many were hermits.

"No great preliminary knowledge of natural science (?) as now understood is necessary. In fact, technical training of this kind is apt to blunt the faculties to a perception of true natural principles.

"This is proven by the fact that very scholarly men usually can see no reason in Alchemy, and nearly all such men fail when they try to demonstrate it. Observations of natural phenomena, reasoning from cause to effect and effect back to cause—above all,

*See "Divine Alchemy."

**See "Divine Alchemy."

patience and perseverance are necessary to accomplish this work.

“In the words of the learned author of the Hermetic Arcanum (Jean d’Espagnet), ‘a studious Tyro of a quick wit, constant mind, inflamed with the study of Philosophy, very skillful in *natural* Philosophy, of a pure heart, complete in manners, mightily devoted to God, though ignorant of practical Chemistry, may with confidence enter into the highway of Nature and peruse the Books of the best Philosophers; let him seek out an ingenious and sedulous Companion for himself, and not despair of obtaining his desire..... Let a Lover of truth make use of a few authors, but of the best note and experienced truth; let him suspect things that are quickly understood, especially in Mystical Names and Secret Operations; for truth lies hid in obscurity; for Philosophers never write more deceitfully than when plainly, nor ever more truly than when obscurely.’ ”

“Magic (Alchemy) is the divinity of man achieved in union with faith,” says E. Levi, “the true Magi are Men-Gods, in virtue of their intimate union with the divine principle. They are without fears and without desires, dominated by no falsehood, sharing

no error, loving without illusion, suffering without impatience, reposing in the quietude of eternal thought. They lean on religion, but are not weighed down thereby; they know what it is, and also that it is necessary and eternal. For debased souls, religion is a yoke imposed through self-interest by the cowardice of fear and the follies of hope; for exalted souls, it is a force which originates from an intensified reliance on the Love of Humanity. A Magus cannot be ignorant, for magic implies superiority, mastership, majority, and majority signifies emancipation by knowledge. The Magus welcomes pleasure, accepts wealth, deserves honor, but is never a slave of one of them; he knows how to be poor, to abstain, and to suffer; he endures oblivion willingly because he is lord of his own happiness, and expects or fears nothing from the caprice of fortune. He can love without being loved; he can create imperishable treasures, and exalt himself above the level of honors or the prizes of the lottery. He possesses that which he seeks, namely, profound peace. He regrets nothing which must end, but remembers with satisfaction that he has met with good in all. His hope is a certitude, for he knows that good is eternal and evil transitory. He enjoys solitude, but does

not fly the society of man ; he is a child with children, joyous with the young, staid with the old, and patient with the foolish, happy with the wise but cannot bear the vulgar. He smiles with all who smile, and mourns with all who weep ; applauding strength, he is yet indulgent to weakness, offending no one, he has himself no need to pardon, for he never thinks himself offended ; he pities those who misconceive him, and seeks an opportunity to serve them ; by the force of kindness only does he avenge himself on the ungrateful ; he leans with affection on all arms stretched out to him in the day of trouble, and does not mistake the irritable pride of Rousseau for a virtue. He knows that he helps others by giving them the occasion for doing good, and he never meets an offer or a demand with a refusal." This is good instruction for all students as to the life they must learn to lead in order to succeed.

Again "Adiramled" says : "Be sure, our Art is no fancy, but grounded on purely scientific principles.

"To quote from an old Master, 'No one need doubt the truth or certainty of this Art. It is as true and certain and as surely ordained by God in Nature as it

is that the sun shines at noontide and the moon shows its soft splendor at night.'

"There is every evidence that the ancients adored their temples by Alchemic Art, which was the common secret of Priests and Kings: 1 Chron. 29:2, 2 Chron. 1:15, Job 22:24, Jer. 10:9, and Hos. 2:8.

"All writers are unanimous in affirming that the substance of our stone is *one* thing.

"The same writer just quoted says: 'As concerns the matter, it is *one*, and contains within itself all that is needed. Its birth is in the sand. It is the distilled moisture of the Moon joined to the light of the Sun and congealed.'

"Nothing truer was ever spoken. It is called a stone, not because it is always seen in the form of a stone, but because it finally becomes a stone, capable of resisting the fire.

"You can hardly put your finger on anything in Nature where it is not. Beginning in the seed, it forms wood, bark, leaves, flowers, fruit. It is the direct cause of all colors seen in Nature, and this is one of its most wonderful attributes.

"Colors, indeed, are the greatest guide to us in the

practice of our art, as they afford certain *landmarks* whereby we may be guided aright (Is. 54:11).

“But I promised to give you various descriptions of this stone as it is found in Nature, because here is where we must look for it.

“I will give one very accurate description of it by Philatheles: ‘Know that our Mercury is before the eyes of all men, though it is known to few. When it is prepared its splendor is most admirable; but the sight is vouchsafed to none, save the sons of knowledge. Do not despise it, therefore, when you see it in sordid guise; for if you do, you will never accomplish our Magistracy—and if you can change its countenance, the transformation will be glorious. For our water is a most pure virgin, and is loved of many, but meets all her wooers in foul garments, in order that she may be able to distinguish the worthy from the unworthy. Our beautiful Maiden abounds in inward graces; unlike the immodest woman who meets her lovers in splendid garments. To those who do not despise her foul exterior, she then appears in all her beauty, and brings them an infinite dower of riches and health.’ Our author here is personifying the active principle

as feminine. I presume because he sees it hidden in water.

“He is referring to the Mercury of the Philosophers, and I would have the student compare his statement carefully with the circumstances of the birth of Jesus Christ, particularly Luke 2:7.

“Then read Zech. 3:3-5, remembering that Joshua and Jesus are identical words in the original Hebrew.

“There is, in fact, everything in Alchemy and in mythology to suggest the idea of this glorious principle being found in very *lowly* surroundings.

“And now, since you know that you need only *one* thing, and that it is a very common thing, you may feel more definitely assured of success.

“Though I say only one thing is required—one *seed*—it is taken for granted that you must have a *soil* in which to sow the seed. Nor is it possible to raise it in more than one soil, because in only one do we find the rays of the sun congealed in just the right proportions.

“I trust you will be able to see the scientific application of the term ‘congealed solar-rays.’ ”

94. As different writers used different words for

the same thing, as already intimated, and expressed different things by the same word, no general rule of interpretation can be given applicable to all of the writings. Each writing, for the most part, must be interpreted by itself; but by reading a few of the best authors, and weighing carefully what each one said, *with a constant reference to Nature*, the student might soon begin to perceive to what, in the main, the writers referred, or of what they treated. The next step might have been a sifting of the writings themselves, so as to exclude the worthless and indifferent, the attention becoming confined to some few authors; to which the author of the "Marrow of Alchemy" refers:

"But thou of Truth a lover, be advised
Beware, and be not easily seduced,
For be thou sure that all that is advised,
By such, this Art to treat who were induced
By envy, is not true; nay, very little
In some books, and in some *scarce a tittle*.

"For know this Art a virgin pure remains,
Though many lovers do her fondly sue;
She scorns a Sophister, and still disdains

A breast for to inhabit that's untrue,
Yet many press to win the Golden Fleece;
'Tis that they gape for as the masterpiece.
"But a true Son of Art doth wisdom prize
Beyond all earthly good, and his desire
To it is bent, he fondly doth devise
By riches to ambition to aspire;
His studies all to knowledge are inclined,
Prizing alone the riches of the mind."

95. The awe with which all of the writers approach the subject is very remarkable, and their unwillingness to write openly of it seems to be of a Pythagorean character. They seem to understand also that contemplation and controversy cannot keep company; for though the latter may sometimes sharpen one's wits, it always disturbs the balance, the judgment, whose equipoise is so necessary in all cases, but especially in a student of Nature. Hence the recommendation of Espagnet in taking leave of his reader, already recited:

"'Farewell, diligent reader; in reading these things, invoke the spirit of Eternal Light; speak little, meditate much, and judge aright.'

"If an enquiry be persistently pushed, the right an-

swer is sure to be gained. People fail of realization mainly from impatience. The fact is, knowledge stands ready for us, but we are not always ready to receive it. We must, indeed, perfect our receivers, for all knowledge comes to us through the Voice of the Silence. One may chase all over the world, employ teachers and read books, and learn infinitely less than may be revealed in one supreme moment when the Silent Voice becomes audible.

“Alchemy, more than any other study, leads to this result. It teaches patience and self-reliance. In its finality it discloses a most tremendous secret. It is, in fact, the world-mystery. No living person can be found to divulge it.

“By its very nature it sets the seal of silence tighter and tighter upon the lips of its votaries, as they advance toward the heart of the mystery. For this reason the masses, taught to believe that knowledge must be orally imparted, stand dumb and disbelieving before this marvel. If it cannot be told outright they refuse to believe it, and consequently remain in ignorance.

“But the man who has evolved to a higher plane of

thought, and proven the powers of the mind in certain lines of individual researches, bethinks himself that if this be a true art, as described in so many books, then certainly it must have been known and practiced by men at some period in the past.

“Faith in the possibility of a thing needs to be established prior to the demonstration itself. Suppose an inventor should say, I will not believe in my idea until I see it worked out—how would it ever be brought forth?

“The fact is, anything that we can conceive of is possible. Ideas come straight from God. Let this thought establish our faith and lend wings to endeavor.

“It is only a question of a few years when all present theories relating to science will be subverted or radically changed through the knowledge derived from Alchemy, which is absolute truth.”*

Is the *will* thus strong? Do others besides “Adiramled” teach this same Truth? Let us see what E. Levi, the greatest of the Transcendental Magus has to say on this subject:

*“Adiramled.”

“To will well, to will long, to will always, but never to lust after anything, such is the secret of power, and this is the Magical Arcanum which Tasso brings forward in the persons of the two knights who come to deliver Rinaldo and to destroy the enchantments of Armida. They withstand equally the most charming nymphs and the most terrible wild beasts. They remain without desires and without fear, and hence they attain their end. Does it follow from this that a true magician inspires more fear than Love? I do not deny it, and while abundantly recognizing how sweet are the allurements of life, while doing full justice to the gracious genius of Anacreon, and to all the youthful efflorescence of the poetry of life, I seriously invite the estimable votaries of pleasure to regard the transcendental sciences merely as a matter of curiosity, and never to approach the magical tripod; the great works of science are deadly for pleasure.

“The man who has escaped from the chain of instincts will first of all realize his omnipotence by the submissiveness of animals. The history of Daniel in the lion’s den is no fable, and more than once, during the persecutions of infant Christianity this phenomena recurred in the presence of the whole Roman people.

A man seldom has anything to fear from an animal of which he is not afraid. The bullets of Jules Gerard, the lion-killer, are magical and intelligent. Once only did he run a real danger; he allowed a timid companion to accompany him, and, looking upon this imprudent person as lost beforehand, he was also afraid, not for himself but for his comrade. Many persons will say that it is difficult and even impossible to attain such resolution, that strength in volition and energy in character are natural gifts. I do not dispute it, but I would point out also that habit can reform Nature; volition can be perfected by education, and, as I have often before said, all magical, like all religious, ceremonial has no other end but thus to test, exercise, and habituate the will by perseverance and by force. The more difficult and laborious the exercise, the greater their effect.

Coming back to the *subject* and the *end* of the Great Work, I shall quote once more from "Azoth, or, the Star in the East" and the seeker after truth should then know the Path:

"Nature widens in proportion as it is investigated, for the links in the silver chain of symbolism multiply as we follow them, and the divine dream of the uni-

verse deepens and intensifies about us the further we plunge therein. When the spirit sets forth on that mighty sea it need never fear the desolating disillusion of a limit attained. There is no end to the sublime delusion. The mystical sequence of natural typology is a series without end, as it is without beginning, and the soul can sail for ever. This is the grandeur and the beauty and the glory, and the philosophic joy of Idealism. Gabriel de Castagne portrays it in his *Terrestrial Paradise* under the evasion of a miracle in medicine. *The goal is forever within us; the dream also is within; and the splendor, the meaning, the charm, the witchery, the enchantment, the depth, the heighth, the distance, are all in a sense within us; for the so-called material universe is only a stage of the Soul's advancement in the development of her infinite self.*

“It is no sea thou seest in the sea,
'Tis but a disguised humanity . . .
All that interests a man is man.”

“At a higher stage, a higher symbolism, a wider universe, a deeper meaning, an increased joy, an intensified loveliness, till the supreme spirit in the full pos-

session of itself, having achieved its own creation, shall enter the Summer Land of eternal maturity, the New Jerusalem, the beatific vision, the higher Consciousness of Nirvana.

“Now, in the order of idealism, beauty and harmony are the touchstone and the test of truth. It is for this reason that false analogies, false images, and deformed conceptions are detestable and revolting things—the perdition of the intellectual soul—for the mind of man creates the Universe after its own likeness, and it is pursued by the phantoms it produces. An irregular and diseased imagination will imprison the Soul in the Tophet of the false and the monstrous. To the priests and poets of the future be, therefore, all health, and the Christ of God within them for their nature’s sublime exaltation! Theirs be ‘the scale of the sages,’ and the ‘Philosophical garden of Love.’ We beseech you, sweet brethren, everlasting friends, by the Crown and the Christ, by the stars in the eyes of Israel, and by that chaste light—*lumen de lumine*—which is the jewelled glistening of Lucasta, to purge the world from darkness by the clarity of intelligence, and by the creation of a loftier symbolism to accomplish the evolution of a loftier Ministry of Song.

To you, standing 'in the foremost files of time,' is committed the Cosmos, as a plastic matter, to be fashioned after your own imaginations for the Sons of Futurity, whose faith is in your hands. 'The light that never was on land or sea,' is *within you*. It is also in your power to project it over the visible universe, and to accomplish thus the complete transfiguration of the world. For the Cosmos is the inheritance of imagination, the potter's clay of the poet, to be shaped however he will. It is also an illimitable symbol to be interpreted by his genius.

"Man is triune in another than the recognized manner. There is, firstly, the outward man, who is capable of a perfection, a beauty, a glory, a joy, and happiness of which at present we have scarcely dreamed. Then there is the *interior* man, whose mystery is illumined by the sun of Consciousness, and whom only, as we have said, the man himself can know. There is, finally, an undiscovered field of being and subsistence not lighted by the radiance of consciousness, which does consequently lie outside all normal knowledge, but is still the true, ultimate, and absolute man—of which the Conscious man is but a part and a fraction, even as the field of life incarnate which is covered by

normal memory may be but a fraction and a part of our past—having an universal immensity, an abyssmal deepness, a dizzy altitude, wherein lie the roots of all mysteries, and into which there is but one narrow path and one straight way of entrance, which is the act of Introspection. If we would know God, we must pass through this gate; if we would know *ourselves* we must span the depth, the heighth, the distance of that withdrawn individuality, which at some point of its extension doth impinge upon Deity. It is possible to undertake this grand, this sublime journey. Is it possible by undertaking it really to *know ourselves*? The Mystics answer: Yes.

“Is it not long, dangerous, and terrible? Well, perhaps in a certain sense, though not ever, or in all senses, it may be all of these; but there is God the Absolute at the end of it. Is it open to all? Yes, it is assuredly open to all, and yet there are few who are called to it. The faculty of introspection is a special gift which is possessed and desired by few; and it requires special strength on all functions of the organic man. (Mysticism, like Alchemy, in the words of the purified ‘Lover of Philalethes’ requires ‘the whole man,’ even as ‘when found it possesses him.’

The ill-balanced mind may be unseated by the prolonged experiment; the heart may wither in the isolation of a solitary life; aspiration, dizzy in the altitude, may collapse, and, returning with a great rush upon the physical, may become broken for further flight; transcendental desire frustrated may overflow upon the material, and may pursue satisfaction among the void and fatal processes of sin.

“To produce a perfect body, it is certain, for example, that we must have a suitable regimen. This is as essential as environment. The life of aspiration and desire, the life towards the Ideal goodness, beauty, and perfection, requires a daily diet regulated in accordance with the Ethical high-water mark at which we propose to aim. A fanatical adherence to any fixed form of diet is evil, because, before all things, and in all things, we are to be regulated by free reason and enlightened tolerance, and it is clear from the immense variety of educated opinion which exists upon the subject of food and its laws, that we are not as yet in possession of a perfect way in diet. Normally, we are guided by custom and appetite, checked by the occasional control of an imperfect medical science,

which is in no branch of its practice more imperfect and limited than in those problems that are connected with the ministry of food. From the empirical standpoint, it is not, therefore, reasonable to dogmatize; but if we approach the question of diet from the ethical and Ideal standpoint, we shall obtain, *a priori*, certain rules to guide us. And first and foremost, *it is ethically and spiritually certain that the veritably ideal life is closed in all its superior pathways to those who partake of flesh.* Here then is no question of a wholesome or strengthening food. On that point opinions may differ, as they differ upon the subject of cereals. At the same time, it may not unreasonably be considered that a food which is ethically detrimental cannot be physically serviceable. Concerning the ethical standpoint, there can, however, *be no doubt.* Viewed therefrom, the slaughter of beasts for our sustenance and a repast on the carcass, however transcendental be the triumphs of the culinary art, it is only removed in degree, and is not at all removed in kind, from the dietary delights of the cannibal. In this doctrine there is no fanaticism and no arbitrary dogma founded upon partial experiment. Philosophy calmly and reasonably distinguishes the existence of an im-

mutable law in the region of ideal excellence. It supports the fundamental contention of the so-called vegetarian, while discountenancing his aberration and mania.

“There is no law in the ideal world which prohibits the use of wine; it has, in fact, an ideal excellence and a symbolic value; it is rich, free, and generous. There is, of course, a law in ideality which absolutely prohibits the misuse of any food or drink, and to be gorged with vegetable stews is no less depraving than to get unreasonably drunk on Tokay.

“Wheresoever there is no fixed principle involved, the supreme liberty of idealism will mark out no hard and fast lines in food, but will make the laws of nourishment a subject of systematic investigation with a view to elaborating an absolute science in the ministry of diet to health. In the meantime, and while such a science is developing, we shall look as before to the poets for assistance, and from them we shall gain our lights. We shall devote ourselves also to the question of the ministry of cleanliness in the preparation of the *vas philosophorum* and therein whatsoever may assist us towards the perfect life in physics will for us

be a religious practice efficacious in the sanctification of the body, which is the visible house of life."

There is now nearly an absolute law of diet and all the students are taught it. In the "Beautiful Philosophy of Initiation" the law is given, and in the instructions of the "Secret Schools" each Neophyte is taught the "Law of Life."

Allentown, Pa., July 24th, 1907.

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